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Shakspeares Merry Tales

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SHAKSPEARE'S

MERRY TALES.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY G. ROUTLEDGE,

SOHO SQUARE.

1845.

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SHAKSPEARE'S

MERRY TALES

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WOOLLEY & COOK, PRINTERS,

ST. BENE'T PLACE, GRACECHURCH STREET, LONDON.

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PREFACE.

If an apology for the present publication be deemed necessary, it is to be found in the fact, that it is one of the most curious additions that have of late years been made to what may be termed Shaksperian Literature; and that it supplies a vacuum therein that has long been open, and which, though occasionally for a time filled up, has been as often re-opened. Every reader of Shakspeare is aware that in the play of "Much Ado about Nothing," the sprightly Beatrice replies to the disguised Benedict in the following terms: —

"*Beatrice.* That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the Hundred Merry Tales."

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Much ingenuity has been wasted in proving to what book Beatrice refers, the "Cent Nouvelle Nouvelle," the "Decameron of Boccacio," and the "Tales and Quick Answers," (printed by Bertholet,) and others, have each had their advocates; and commentators have spoken in favour of each, with equal confidence, and, as is now proved, with equal error, for the identical work, under its original title, printed during the life of Shakspeare, has been restored to the world by an accident, which is thus related by the late Mr. S. W. Singer.

"This curious and important addition to the stock of Shakspeariana, had been converted into pasteboard, which formed the covers of an old book; in its transformation it has suffered much, the tops of many leaves, the bottoms of others are wanting, and of some only a tattered fragment remains. This will account for the lacunæ which so frequently occur in the following reprint, for we

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have only ventured to fill them up when the necessary words were tolerably obvious."

The above quotation refers to the present collection as far as page 104, which constitutes the book entitled, "A Hundred Merry Tales," being the work of which Beatrice speaks. The remaining portion of this volume completes a curious collection, published by the late Mr. S. W. Singer, under the supposition that they were the much desired and long sought Tales.

The errors to which the antiquarian is occasionally subject is drolly illustrated in the history of this book. The second part, commencing on page 105, and ending, in the original, at the 114th Tale, was first published, and with much ingenuity proved to be the long lost "Simon Pure." It was accompanied by a statement of the probability of there never having been but one edition; and from this circumstance it was assumed, that

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the great rarity of the work arose. An addition was, however, made to it in the succeeding year, consisting of the remainder of the volume, *viz.* from Tale 114 to the end, which is, with a peculiar naiveté, thus announced:—

"When the Tales and Quick Answers were reprinted last year, we omitted to mention, that Warton, in his "History of English Poetry," vol. 3, p. 484, cites from the Stationers' Book a license to Henry Bynneman, in 1576, to print "Merry Tales, Wittie Questions, and Quick Answers!"

"Last year we urged the probability of there never having been but one edition of the Tales and Quick Answers: we are happy to have it in our power now to prove that our conjecture was erroneous, that there was more than one edition, and that the license, above cited, regarded the same little work under a different title."

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"The edition from whence the following twenty-five additional Tales are extracted, is an exact copy of Bertholet's Tales and Quicke Answeres for the first one hundred and fourteen Tales; to which those now here reprinted succeed."

The year does not however expire before the real "Simon Pure" makes his appearance, and thus dissipates the conjectures of our amiable commentator, and sets the question for ever at rest, as to what book Shakspeare alluded under the title of the "Hundred Merry Tales;" Mr. Singer thus notices the circumstance:—

"It has happened to us, as it frequently does to those who build their theories upon any other than direct proof; a simple fact, or the recovery of a mislaid document, at once overthrows all speculation. While we were busily engaged in endeavouring to show that a little book, printed by Bertholet, had

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some claim to be honoured with the title of the "Hundred Merry Tales," a most amiable and accomplished scholar (the Rev. J. J. Conybeare) had by chance discovered a considerable fragment of another collection of stories, under the title of "A. C. Mery Talys." Thus demonstrating the fallacy of our conjecture, as well as those of Mr. Stevens and Mr. Reed. All future editors of Shakspeare may now rest satisfied that the book alluded to, in "Much Ado about Nothing," is neither a translation of the "Decameron of Boccaccio," nor of the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles."

In addition to the fact of its being so intimately connected with Shaksperian Literature, the book contains other claims to the observation of the curious; it presents a strange specimen of the latitude of language allowed in the glorious days of the good Queen Bess; it proves that the age which produced some of the highest intellects, and best of men,

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which raised England to a most elevated position among the nations, was still characterized by little respect to delicay of speech or regard for decency of manners. The "Hundred Merry Tales" were, it would appear, originally published in the reign of Henry the 8th, about 1520, and was one of the most popular books of that day, as is proved by the many allusions thereto, which are found in contemporary writers. That its popularity was undiminished till the time of Mary is certain, as in the Stationers' books, there is a license to reprint it, dated 1557; from the same source we find another license to print it in 1576, showing that its vulgar licentiousness was still relished. Laneham also speaks of it in his letter, dated 20th of August, 1575, and directed unto his good friend, Master Humfrey Martin, a substantial merchant, whom he appears to wish to astonish by a recitation of his court favour, and of his intimacy with the gallants

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of the day: he is enumerating the books in the library of Captain Cox, whom he thus describes:—"and fyrst, Captin Cox, an od man I promiz yoo: right skilfull, very cunning, in fens and hardy az Gawin, for his tonsword hangs at his tablz eend; great ouersight hath he in matters of storie." This captain it would seem, from the catalogue of his books, was well read in the literature of the day; and the "Hundred Mery Talez" appears beside the "Ship of Foolz," "Danielz Dreamz," and other works mentioned, as familiar to the court.

Laneham is writing to his friend, Martin, an account of the personages who figured during the Queen's visit to Kenilworth, and speaks of this book as though it were necessarily in the collection of one of "great ouersight in matters of storie." In submitting this curious collection to the public, we have maintained as nearly as possible the style of

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the original, though to render it intelligible we have used modern phraseology. With respect to the character of the Tales, and their influence upon society, we are not in the least fearful that the pleasure to be derived from that portion which possesses talent, combined with the interest it excites as a relic of the manners and morals of a people of a particular period, will be decreased by fear of their having any influence in injuring morality or religion: the antiquated licentiousness of such as are objectionable, is only disgusting; it fills us with astonishment, that such should ever have been received with applause, but it could neither stir the passions of the most mercurial, nor excite the imagination of the most libidinous: their startling absurdity may excite some to laughter, they can win none to a liking.

Licentious, however, as some of these tales certainly are, they are chaste when compared with the "Cent Nouvelle Nouvelle," the con-

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temporary favourite of the continental public. While then we are compelled to allow them as evidence of a loose state of morals, during a period of which every Englishman is proud, and to a degree feel humbled by the fact, we are still cheered by the reflection, that this arose from the peculiar character of the times, not of the people; and we perceive that then, as now, our continental neighbours far surpassed us in literary profligacy; for even the "Heptameron" of the Queen of Navarre, consists of details, not only more dirty, but in many cases much more dangerous to morality, because calculated to excite the imaginations, and the passions, of the young, the ardent, and the inexperienced: from the Tales which we have taken the liberty of christening "Shakspeare's Merry Tales," (for the same reason that Mr. Singer adopted his Title,) such a misfortune can never result; we should however have erased such tales as were objec-

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tionable, if we could so have done without compromising our object, which was to present the public with a book (in as perfect a state as possible,) which has been so long and so vainly sought for; and in the second place, to present it at the same time with a specimen of the sort of wit which was in high estimation by our forefathers, during one of the most remarkable eras in English history.

In perusing the book, the reader will be struck with the strange jumble of piety and all but blasphemy; moral axioms, and gross ribaldry, which are frequently opposed immediately the one to the other; and among the most curious feature of the work is the moral reflections appended to most of the tales, which occasionally is not a little far fetched, and will often excite a smile which the tale itself has failed to produce

The better part of the tales are characterized by various degrees of wit and talent: the

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Hundred Merry Tales are perhaps inferior to the other portion of the book, and if we may judge from the manner in which Beatrice is made to speak of them, Shakspeare himself did not hold them in very high respect. They appear to be a collection translated from the Italian, French, and Latin, the original probably having been in existence very long before the translation.

The small space allowed us by the bookseller prevents further comment, we shall therefore close by observing, that the indecency of some portions of them excepted, they are not inferior in talent, nor less amusing than many of the popular collections of our own day, while they are far more curious as illustrations of the times to which we have already referred.

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PART I.

A C. MERRY TALES.

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MERRY TALES.

TALE I.—OF HIM THAT SAID THERE WERE BUT TWO COMMANDMENTS.

There was in the country a certain curate that preached in the pulpit of the ten commandments, saying, that there were ten commandments that every man should keep, and he that break any of them committed sin; howbeit he said, that sometimes it was deadly and sometimes venial: but when it was deadly sin and when venial there were many doubts therein. And a miller, a young man, a mad fellow, who came seldom to church, and had been at very few or no sermons in his life, answered him shortly in this wise: "I marvel, master parson, that ye say there are so many commandments, and so many *douts*, for I never heard tell of but two commandments, that is to say, command me to you, and command me from you: nor I never heard tell of more *douts* than twain, that is to say, *dout* the

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candle and *dout* the fire." At which answer all the people fell to laughing.

By this tale we may see that those who are brought up without learning or good manners, can never be other than rude and beastly, although possessed of good natural wits.

TALE II.—OF THE WIFE WHO LAID WITH HER APPRENTICE, AND CAUSED HIM TO BEAT HER HUSBAND, WHO WAS DISGUISED IN HER APPAREL.

There was a wife who had appointed her apprentice to come to her bed in the night, which servant had long endeavoured to have his pleasure, and who, according to appointment, came to her bed-side in the night, when her husband was with her in bed, which, when she perceived, she caught the apprentice by the hand, and holding him fast, awakened her husband, and said, "sir, ye have a false and untrue servant, which is William, your apprentice, who hath long wooed me to have his pleasure, and because I could not avoid his continual importunities, I have appointed him this night to meet me in the garden arbour, and if you will put on my clothes and go there, you shall see proof thereof, and then you may punish him as in your discretion

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you may think best." The husband, thus informed, put on his wife's clothes and went to the arbour, and when he was gone the apprentice took his place by the side of the wife, and having remained an hour or two, the wife thought it time for him to leave, and thus said, "now go thy way into the arbour and meet him, and take a good stick in thy hand, and say, thou didst make the appointment to prove whether I would be a good woman or not, and then reward him as thou thinkest best." The apprentice, acting by his mistress's counsel, went into the arbour, where he found his master drest in his mistress's apparel, and said, "Ah! thou harlot, art thou come hither; now I see well if I would be false to my master thou wouldst be so also; but I would rather thou wert hanged than I would do him so traitorous a deed, therefore, I shall give thee the punishment that thy conduct has deserved;" and immediately he began to thrash him well about the shoulders and back, and gave him a dozen or two of stripes; the master, not liking this treatment, called to him, "peace, William, my own true servant, for God's sake hold thy hand, for I am thy master, not thy mistress;" "nay," said the apprentice, "thou

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knowest thou art but a harlot, I made this appointment to prove thee," and kept on thrashing him; "hold, hold," said the master, "I beseech thee, no more, for I am not she, but thy master, for I have a beard;" and therewith he took hold of his hand and placed it to his beard; "good master," then said the apprentice, "I cry you mercy;" and then the master went back to his wife, and she asked him how he had succeeded, and he answered, "I tell thee, my wife, I have been soundly beaten; howbeit, I have cause to be glad, for I thank God I have as true a wife and servant as any man in England."

By this tale ye may see it is not always wisdom for a man to be ruled by his wife's counsel.

TALE III.—OF JOHN ADROYNS IN THE DEVIL'S APPAREL.

It happened in a market town, in the county of Suffolk; there was a stage play, in which a man, named John Adroyns, who dwelt in another village two miles from thence, played the devil. And when the play was over, this John Adroyns in the evening departed from the market town to go home; and because he had there no change of clothing, he went

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forth in his devil's apparel; and his way lay through a warren of rabbits, belonging to a gentleman of the village, where he himself dwelt; at which time it happened that a priest, a vicar of the church, with two or three other idle fellows, brought with them a horse, a snare, and a ferret, to take the rabbits; and when the ferret was in the earth, and the snare set over the path where this John Adroyns should come, the priest and his fellows, seeing him coming, and considering they were in the devil's service, by stealing the rabbits, thought it was the devil indeed, ran away for fear. This John Adroyns, as it was somewhat dark, and being in haste, saw not the snare, but stumbled over it, and with the fall he almost broke his neck. But when he was a little recovered he looked up and saw it was a snare to take rabbits, and that the priest and his fellows ran away for fear of him; and looking further he perceived a horse tied to a bush, laden with rabbits, which they had taken; and he took the horse and the snare, and rode to the lord of the warren, with intent to have thanks for taking such a prey; and when he knocked at the gate, the gentleman's servant asked who was there, and suddenly opened the gate; but as soon as he perceived

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him in his devil's raiment, was sorely amazed, and shut the gate again, and went in, and sware to his master that the devil was at the gate, and would come in. The gentleman, hearing this, called another of his servants, and bade him go to the gate to know of a certainty who was there; and this second servant, coming to the gate, durst not open it, but asked with a loud voice who was there; whereupon this John Adroyns in the devil's apparel, answered him, "tell thy master I must needs speak to him, or I go." The servant hearing this—

[*A few lines wanting.*]

"the devil indeed is at the gate, sitting upon a horse, which is laden with souls, and probably come for your soul also; do ye intend to let him have your soul, for if he had it I think he would go." The gentleman then, being wonderfully frightened, called his chaplain, with as many servants as durst go, and, taking a candle and holy water, went to the gate, where the chaplain, with many ceremonies, said, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I command and charge thee, in the holy name of God, to tell me wherefore thou comest hither. 'This John

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Adroyns, seeing them conjure after such manner, said, "nay, fear not me, for I am a good devil, even John Adroyns, your neighbour, who played the devil to day in the play, and I bring my master a dozen or two of his own rabbits, which were stolen, indeed, and the horse, and the snare, and made the thieves from fear to run away." When they heard him speak, by his voice they knew him well, and opened the gate and let him in; so all their fear was turned to mirth and sport.

By this tale we may see that men fear much more than they need, which causes others to believe that spirits and devils have been seen in divers places when it was not so.

TALE IV.—OF THE RICH MAN AND HIS TWO SONS.

There was a rich man, who lay in his bed sick unto death, therefore his eldest son came to him and besought him to give his blessing; to whom the father said, "my son, thou shalt have God's blessing and mine, and because thou hast ever been dutiful and well behaved, I give and bequeath to thee all my lands;" to whom the son answered, "nay, father, I trust, by God's grace, thou wilt long live to occupy them yourself." Soon after this the second

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son came to his father, and desired him to bless him also; and his father answered him, "my son, thou hast ever been kind and gentle, and I give thee God's blessing and mine, and bequeath thee all my moveable goods." But the son answered, "nay, my father, I trust you will long live to use your goods yourself."

[*A few lines wanted.*]

By this tale we may perceive that young people that * * * * * * their friends counsel in youth, in times—

TALE V.—OF THE CUCKOLD WHO GAINED A RING BY HIS JUDGMENT.

Two gentlemen, who were acquainted, appointed to meet a gentlewoman in her chamber at different hours, but the same night. The first came at the appointed hour, and lost his ring in the bed; the second when he came to bed, was so fortunate as to find it. Two or three days afterwards the first gentleman saw his ring on the other's finger, and demanded it, which the other refused, and bade him tell where he lost it, and he said in such a gentlewoman's bed; and the one then insisted upon having it, and the other would not give

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it up. They then agreed to be decided by the first man they met; and it so happened that they met the husband of this gentlewoman, and requested him to decide between them: after showing him the whole matter, "then, my judgment is," said he, "that he who owned the sheets should have the ring." "Then," said they, "for your good judgment you shall have the ring."

TALE VI.—OF THE SCHOLAR WHO GAVE HIS SHOES TO BE MENDED.

In the University of Oxford there was a scholar that delighted much to speak eloquently, and to use high-flown language, and technical terms, who came to a cobler with his shoes which wanted nailing, and said as follows:—"Cobler, I pray thee, set two triangles and two semi-circles upon my sub-pedestals, and I shall pay thee for thy labour." The cobler, because he did not understand him, answered shortly, and said, "sir, your eloquence passes my intelligence, but I promise you if ye meddle with me, the nailing of your shoes shall cost you threepence."

By this tale you may see that it is a folly to speak in technical terms to those who are rude and unlearned.

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TALE VII.—OF THE MAN WHO SAID A WOMAN'S TONGUE WAS LIGHTEST OF DIGESTION.

There was a certain artificer in London who was sick, and could not digest his food, to whom a physician gave counsel, that he must only eat meat that was light, and small birds, such as swallows, sparrows, and particularly that bird called a wagtail, because it being always moving its flesh was wondrously light and easy of digestion. The sick man, hearing the physician say this, answered, "sir, if that be the cause of these birds being light of digestion, I know of a much lighter of digestion than either sparrow, swallow, or wagtail, and that is my wife's tongue; for it is never at rest, but ever moving and stirring."

By this tale we may learn a good general rule of physic.

TALE VIII.—OF THE WOMAN WHO FOLLOWED HER FOURTH HUSBAND TO THE GRAVE.

There was a woman who had four husbands, and it happened that the fourth died, and was brought to the church to be buried, whom this woman followed, and made such lamentations that her neighbours thought she would swoon, and die for sorrow; therefore, one of her gossips whispered in her ear, and bad her for God's sake take comfort and refrain from

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grief, or peradventure it would endanger her life; to whom the woman answered, "indeed, good neighbour, I have cause to mourn, if ye did but know all; for I have buried three husbands besides this man, but was never in the case I now am, for there was not one of them but that, when I followed the corpse to church, I was sure of another husband before I came back; and now I am sure of no other husband; therefore, you see I have great cause to be sad and heavy.

By this tale we may see the truth of the proverb, which says, "it is as great pity to see a woman weep as a goose to go barefoot."

TALE IX.—OF THE WOMAN WHO SAID HER LOVER CAME TOO LATE.

There was another woman, kneeling at the mass of requiem while the corpse of her husband lay on the bier in the church, to whom a young man came and spake in her ear as though it had been something concerning the funeral; however he spake of no such matter, but only wooed her, that he might be her husband; to whom she answered, "sir, by my troth, I am sorry ye came so late, for I am

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engaged already; I made sure yesterday of another man."

This tale showeth that women are often wise, and loth to lose any time.

TALE X.—OF THE MILLER WITH HIS GOLDEN THUMB.

A merchant, who thought to quiz a miller, said unto him in a large company, "sir, I have heard say that every miller has a golden thumb;" the miller answered, that it was true. "Then," said the merchant, "let me see thy thumb;" and when the miller showed his thumb, the merchant said, "I cannot perceive that thy thumb is gilt, but it is as all other men's thumbs be." The miller answered, "sir, it is true that my thumb is gilt, but ye have no power to see it, for there is this property in it, that no cuckold has power to perceive the gold."

TALE XI.—OF THE HORSEMAN OF IRELAND WHO PRAYED O'CONNER TO HANG UP THE FRIAR.

One who was called O'Conner, an Irish lord, took prisoner a horseman, one of his great enemies, and who, spite of any request or entreaty the horseman made, gave orders that he should immediately be hanged, and sent

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for a friar to shrive him, and prepare him for death. This friar then examined him of various sins, and asked him, among others, what was the greatest sin he ever committed. The horseman answered him, "the greatest sin that ever I did, and which I now most repent, is, that when I found O'Connor last week in a church, I might have burned him, church and all; and because conscience prevented me burning the church, I tarried so long that O'Connor escaped; and that same deferring of burning the church is one of the worst acts of my life, of which I have to repent." The friar, perceiving him in this mind, said, "peace, in the name of God, and change thy mind, and die in charity, or thou wilt never go to heaven." "Nay," quoth the horseman, "I will never change that mind, whatever becomes of my soul." The friar, hearing this, came to O'Connor, and said, "sir, in the name of God, have pity upon this man's soul, and let him not die in this mind, for if he die now, he is so utterly out of charity, his soul will surely be damned." The horseman, hearing the friar thus entreat for him, said to O'Conner, "thou seest plainly by this man's words, that, if I die now, I am out of charity, I shall not go to heaven; and so it is, that I am out of charity

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indeed now; but thou seest also that this friar is a good man, and living in charity, therefore he is ready to go to heaven, so am not I; so, I pray thee, hang up the friar, now that he is prepared, and let me stay till another time, that I may be in charity, and fit to go to heaven." O'Conner hearing this answer of the horseman, spared his life, and forgave him that time.

By this tale we may see that he who is in danger of his enemy, who hath no pity, cannot do better than show him the utmost extent of the malice he beareth toward him.

TALE XII.—OF THE PRIEST WHO NEITHER SAID CORPUS MEUS NOR CORPUS MEUM.

The archdeacon of Essex who had been long in authority, in a time of visitation, when all the priests appeared before him, called aside three of the young priests, who were accused that they could not well say their divine service; and asked them, when they said mass, whether they said, corpus meus or corpus meum. The first priest said, he said corpus meus; the second said, corpus meum; then he asked the third which he said, who answered, "sir, because there are great doubts,

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and divers men be of divers opinions, and that I might be sure not to offend, when I came to the place I left it out altogether." Then the bishop openly rebuked them all three; but divers, who were present, thought him more in fault himself, in that he before admitted them to be priests.

This tale showeth that one ought to take heed how he rebuketh another lest it turn to his own discomfort.

TALE XIII.—OF TWO FRIARS WHEREOF ONE LOVED NOT THE EEL'S HEAD NOR THE OTHER THE TAIL.

Two friars sat at a gentleman's table, who had before him, on a fasting day, an eel, and cut the head off the eel, and laid it on one of the friar's plate; but the friar, because he would have had of the middle of the eel, said to the gentleman, that he loved no eel heads. This gentleman also cut the tail off the eel, and laid it on the other friar's plate; he likewise, because he would have had of the middle of the eel, said, he loved no eel tails. This gentleman, perceiving this, gave the tail to him who said he loved not the head, and gave the head to him who said he loved not the tail; and as for the middle he ate part himself and

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gave part to others, who were at the table with him; wherefore, these friars, for anger, would eat not a morsel; and so they, for all their craft and subtlety, were not only deceived of the best part of the eel, but thereof had no part at all.

By this tale ye see that those who covet the best part, sometimes therefore, lose the mean part and all.

TALE XIV.—OF THE WELSHMAN THAT SHROVE HIM FOR BREAKING HIS FAST ON A FRIDAY.

A Welshman, dwelling in a wild part of Wales, came to his curate in the time of Lent, and was confessed; and when his confession was at the end, the curate asked him if he had any other thing to say that grieved his conscience; who, sore abashed, answered not a word a great while; at last, by exhortation of his ghostly father; he said that there was one thing in his mind that he was ashamed to confess, for it was so grievous he feared God would never forgive him; to whom the curate answered, that God's mercy was above all, and bad him not despair; for, whatever it was, if he was repentant, God would forgive it. And so, by long exhortation, he showed thus: "sir, it happened once, that as my wife

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was making a cheese on a Friday, I would have fain known if it was salt or fresh, and took a little of the whey in my hand and put it into my mouth, and, before I was aware of it, part of it went down my throat, against my will, and so I broke my fast;" to whom the curate said, "if there is no other thing, I warrant God will forgive thee." So when he had well comforted him with the mercy of God, the curate pressed him to answer a question truly; and when the Welshman had promised to tell the truth, the curate said, there were robberies and murders done near the place where he lived, and divers men found slain; and asked him if he knew any thing pointing to any of them; to whom he answered, "yes;" and said he had been privy to many of them, and did help to rob and to slay divers of them. Then the curate asked him why he did not confess him thereof; the Welshman answered, he took that for no sin, for it was a custom among them, that if any booty came of any rich merchant, riding, that it was but a true neighbour's deed, one to help the other; and so they held it but for good fellowship and neighbourhood.

Here may ye see that some have remorse of conscience for small venial sins, and fear not to do great offences, without fear of the world

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or dread of God, and, as the common proverb is, "they stumble at a straw, but leap over a block."

TALE XV.—OF THE MERCHANT OF LONDON, WHO PUT NOBLES IN HIS MOUTH ON HIS DEATH BED.

A rich covetous merchant there was, who dwelt in London, who ever gathered money, and could never find in his heart to spend ought upon himself or any one else, who fell sick, and as he lay on his death bed, had his purse lying at his bed's head, and had such a love to his money, that he put his hand in his purse and took out thereof ten or twelve pounds in nobles, and put them in his mouth; and because his wife and others perceived him very sick and like to die, they besought him to be confessed, and brought the curate unto him, and when they had caused him to say "benedicite," the curate bad him cry God mercy, and show to him his sins. Then the sick man began to say, "I cry God mercy, I have offended in the seven deadly sins, and broken the ten commandments;" and because of the gold in his mouth, he muffled so in his speech, that the curate could not well understand him, and asked him what he had in

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his mouth that letted his speech. "I wys, master parson," quoth the sick man, "I have nothing in my mouth but a little money, because I know not where I shall go, I thought I would take some spending money with me, for I know not what need I shall have thereof;" and immediately after that saying died, before he was confessed, or repentant, that any man could perceive, and so belikelihood went to the devil.

By this tale ye may see that they, who all their lives will never do charity to their neighbours, that God, in time of their death, will not suffer them to have grace of repentance.

TALE XVI.—OF THE MILLER WHO STOLE NUTS, AND OF THE TAILOR WHO STOLE A SHEEP.

There was a certain rich husbandman in a village who loved nuts marvellously well, and set trees of filberts and other nut trees in his orchard, and nourished them well all his life; and when he died, made his executors promise to bury with him, in his grave, a bag of nuts; which executors, for fear of losing their places, fulfilled his mind and did so. It happened that the same night he was buried there was

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a miller in a white coat came to this man's garden, to the intent to steal a bag of nuts; and in the way he met a tailor in a black coat, a scape-grace of his acquaintance, and showed him his intent; this tailor, likewise, showed him that he intended to steal a sheep; and so they both there agreed to go forward, every man severally with his purpose; and after that they appointed to make good cheer with each other, and to meet again in the church porch, and he that came first to tarry for the other. The miller, when he had obtained his nuts, came first to the church porch and tarried for his fellow; and, the meanwhile, sat still there, and cracked nuts.

It happened that the sexton of the church, because it was about nine o'clock, came to ring curfew; and when he looked in the porch and saw one all in white cracking nuts, he thought it had been the dead man risen out of his grave, cracking the nuts that were buried with him, and ran home again in all haste, and told a cripple who was in his house what he had seen; this cripple, thus hearing him, rebuked the sexton, and said, that if he were able he would go and conjure the spirit. "By my troth," said the sexton, "if thou darest do that I will bear thee on my neck;" and so

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they both agreed. The sexton then took the cripple on his neck, and came into the churchyard again; the miller in the porch, seeing one coming bearing a thing on his neck, thought it had been the tailor coming with the sheep, and rose up to meet them; and as he came toward them, he asked, "is he fat? is he fat?" The sexton, hearing him say so, for fear, cast down the cripple, saying, "fat or lean take him as he is," and ran away; and the cripple, by miracle was made whole, and ran away as fast as he, or faster. This miller perceiving that there were two, and that one ran after the other, thought that one had spied the tailor stealing the sheep, and that he ran after him to take him; and fearing that one had spied him also, stealing the nuts, he for fear left his nuts behind him, and as secretly as he could, ran home to his mill. Soon after he was gone the tailor came with the stolen sheep to the church porch to seek the miller, and when he found there the nut shells, he supposed that his fellow had been there, and gone home again, (as he was indeed;) therefore he took up the sheep again on his neck, and went toward the mill; but yet, during this while, the sexton ran away, not to his own house, but went to the parish priest's

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chamber, and showed him how the spirit of the man had risen out of the grave, cracking nuts as ye have heard before. Wherefore the priest said, he would go and conjure him, if the sexton would go with him; and so they both agreed. The priest did on his surplice and a stole about his neck, and took holy water with him, and came with the sexton toward the church; and as soon as he entered the church-yard, the tailor, with the white sheep on his neck, intending, as I before have shown, to go down to the mill, met with them, and thought that the priest in his surplice had been the miller in his white coat, and said, "by God, I have him, I have him;" meaning the sheep he had stolen. The priest, seeing the tailor all in black, and a white thing on his neck, thought it was the devil carrying away the spirit of the dead man that was buried, ran away as fast as he could, taking the way toward the mill, and the sexton running after him. This tailor, seeing one following the other, thought that some one followed the miller to do him harm, and thought he would follow also, that if need were to help the miller, and went on till he came to the mill and knocked at the mill door; the miller, being within, asked, "who was there?" the

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tailor answered, and said, "by God, I have caught one of them, and tied him fast by the legs;" but the miller, hearing him say that he had him tied fast by the legs, thought it had been the constable that had taken the tailor for stealing the sheep, and had tied him by the legs, and feared he had come to take him also for stealing the nuts; wherefore the miller opened a back door and ran away as fast as he could: the tailor, hearing the back door opening, went on the other side of the mill, and saw the miller running away, and stood there a little while musing with the sheep on his neck. Then was the parish priest and the sexton, standing there under the mill-house, hiding them for fear, and saw the tailor again with the sheep on his neck, and thought still it had been the devil with the man's spirit, and for fear ran away; but because they knew not the ground well, the priest leaped into a ditch, almost over his head, and fearing to be drowned, cried with a loud voice, "help, help;" then the tailor looked and saw the miller run one way, and the sexton another, and heard the priest crying help, thought it had been the constable with a great company, to take him to prison for stealing the sheep, so he threw down the

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sheep and ran another way as fast as he could; and so every man was afraid of each other without cause.

By this tale you may see well, it is folly for any man to fear a thing too much, till he has some proof or cause.

TALE XVII.—OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS, WHERE THEY SHOULD SOON BE FOUND.

In the old world, when all things could speak, the four elements met together for many things which they had to do, because they must meddle always one with another, and had communication together of divers matters; and, because they could not conclude all their matters at that season, they appointed to break communication for that time, and to meet again another time; therefore, each one of them showed to the other where their most abiding was, and where their fellows should find them, if need should require. And, first, the earth said, "brethren, ye know well as for me I am permanent always, and not removable, therefore ye may be sure to have me always when ye list." The water said, "if ye list to seek me ye shall be sure to have me under a tuft of green rushes, or

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else in a woman's eye." The wind said, "if ye list to speak with me ye shall be sure to have me among aspen leaves, or else in a woman's tongue." "Then," quoth the fire, "if any of you list to seek me ye shall ever be sure to find me in a flint stone, or else in a woman's heart."

By this tale you may learn as well the properties of the four elements as the properties of woman.

TALE XVIII.—OF THE WOMAN WHO POURED THE POTAGE IN THE JUDGE'S MALE.

There was a justice but late in the realm of England, called Master Vavesor, a very homely man, and rude of conditions, and loved never to spend much money. This Master Vavesor rode on a time in his circuit in the north country, where he had agreed with the sheriff for a certain sum of money for his charges through the shire; so that, at every inn and lodging, this Master Vavesor paid for his own costs. It fortuned so, that when he came to a certain lodging, he commanded one Turpin, his servant, to see that he used good husbandry, and to save such things as were left, and to carry them with him to serve him

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at the next baiting. This Turpin, doing his master's commandment, took the broken bread, broken meat, and all such things as were left, and put in his master's clothes sack; the wife of the house, perceiving that he took all such fragments and victuals with him that was left, and put in the clothes sack, she brought up the potage that was left in the pot, and when Turpin had turned his back a little aside, she poured the potage into the clothes sack, which run upon the justice's robe of scarlet and other of his garments, and soiled them very evil, so that they were much hurt therewith. This Turpin, suddenly turning, saw it, and reviled the wife therefore, and ran to his master, and told him what she had done; wherefore Master Vavesor immediately called the wife, and said to her thus, "thou drab, what hast thou done? why hast thou poured the potage in my clothes sack and marred my raiment and gear?" "O sir," quoth the wife, "I know well you are a judge of the realm, and I perceive by you, your mind is to do right, and to have that is your own; and your mind is to have all things with you that ye have paid for, both broken meat and other thing that is left, and so it is reason that ye have; and therefore, because your servant hath taken the broken meat and put

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it in your clothes sack, I therein put the potage that was left, because ye have well and truly paid for them; if I should keep any thing from you that ye have paid for, peradventure ye would trouble me in the law another time."

Here ye may see that he that playeth the niggard too much some time it turneth to his own loss.

TALE XIX.—OF THE WEDDED MEN WHO CAME TO HEAVEN TO CLAIM THEIR HERITAGE.

A certain wedded man there was, who, when he was dead, came to heaven's gates to St. Peter, and said, he came to claim his bad heritage which he had deserved, St. Peter asked him what he was; and he said, "a wedded man;" anon St. Peter opened the gates, and bade him come in, for he was worthy to have his heritage, because he had had much trouble, and was worthy to have a crown of glory. Anon there came another man, and said he had had two wives; to whom St. Peter answered and said, "come in for thou art worthy to have a double crown of glory, for thou hast had double trouble." At the last there came the third, claiming his heritage, and said to St. Peter, that he had

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had three wives, and desired to come in. "What," quoth St. Peter, "thou hast been once in trouble and thereof delivered, and then willingly wouldst be troubled again, and yet again thereof delivered, and for all that could not beware the third time, but entered willingly into trouble again, therefore go thy way to hell, for thou shalt never come in heaven, thou art not worthy."

This tale is a warning to them, who have been twice in peril, to beware how they come therein the third time.

TALE XX.—OF THE MERCHANT WHO CHARGED HIS SON TO FIND ONE TO SING FOR HIS SOUL.

A rich merchant of London there was, who had one son that was somewhat unthrifty; therefore his father, upon his death bed, called him to him, and said, he well knew that he had been unthrifty; howbeit, if he knew he would mend his conditions he would make him his executor, and leave him his goods, so that he would promise him to pray for his soul, and to find one daily to sing for him; which thing to perform his son made there a faithful promise. After that, this man made him his executor and died. But after that, his son

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kept such riot, that in a short time he had wasted and spent all, and had nothing left but a hen and a cock, that was his father's. It happened then that one of his friends came to him, and said he was very sorry that he had wasted so much; and asked him how he would perform his promise made to his father, that he would keep one to sing for him: this young man answered and said, "by God, yet I will perform my promise, for I will keep this same cock alive still, and he will crow every day, and so he shall sing every day for my father's soul, and so I will perform my promise well enough."

By this tale ye may see, that it is wisdom for a man to do good deeds himself, while he is here, and not to trust to the prayer and promise of his executors.

TALE XXI.—OF THE MAID THAT WAS WASHING CLOTHES, AND ANSWERED THE FRIAR.

There was a maid stood by a river's side, in her smock, washing clothes, and as she stooped often times, her smock cleaved between her buttocks; a friar passing by and noticing this, said to her in sport, "maid, take heed, for Bayard bites on the bridle;" "nay, wise

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master," answered the maid, "he doth but wipe his mouth, and thinketh you will come and kiss it."

By this ye will see that a woman's answer is never to seek.

TALE XXII.—OF THE THREE WISE MEN OF GOTAM.

A certain man there was, dwelling in a town called Gotam, that went to a fair three miles to buy sheep; and as he came over a bridge he met one of his neighbours, and told him whither he went, and asked him which way he would bring them; which said he would bring them over the same bridge. "Nay," quoth the other man, "but thou shalt not." "By God," quoth—

[*A few lines wanting.*]

A MILLER, WITH A SACK OF MEAL* upon a horse, a neighbour of theirs, coming past, patiently asked them what was the cause of their variance; they then showed to him the matter and cause, as ye have heard; this third man, the miller, began to rebuke them by a familiar example, and took his sack of meal from his

* The words in small capitals are supplied to enable the reader to understand the tale.

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horse's back, and opened it, and poured all the meal from the sack into the running river, whereby all the meal was lost, and said thus, "by my truth, neighbours, because ye strive for driving over the bridge those sheep which be not yet bought, nor wot not where they be, me thinkest, therefore, there is even as much wit in your heads as there is meal now in my sack."

This tale showeth you that some men taketh upon themselves to teach other men wisdom, when they are but fools themselves.

TALE XXIII.—OF THE GREY FRIAR WHO ANSWERED HIS PENITENT.

As there is not sufficient of this story to make any sense of it, although quite sufficient to show it was one of ribaldry, it is omitted; the remains consisted of but eight lines.

TALE XXIV.—OF THE GENTLEMAN THAT BARE THE SEAT OF THE PRIVY ABOUT HIS NECK.

A chandler (being a widower) dwelt at Holborn, near London, who had a fair daughter, whom a young gentleman of Thavies Inn courted continually, with a view to have his

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pleasure of her, which by long suit he at last obtained; and she made an appointment with him to come upon a certain night to her father's house, and she would convey him into her chamber secretly, which was an inner chamber within her father's chamber. According to appointment all things were performed, so that he lay with her all night, and made good cheer until about four o'clock in the morning, at which time it happened that the young gentleman fell coughing, which came upon him so violently that he could not refrain. The wench, fearing her father that lay in the next chamber, advised him to put his head into the privy, lest her father should hear him; as she advised, so he did; but the effluvia from the privy caused him to cough much more, and so loud that the wench's father heard him, and asked of his daughter, what man it was that coughed in her chamber; she answered, "nobody," but the young man coughed still more and more, whom the father hearing, said, "by God's body, harlot, I will see who is there," and rose out of his bed; the wench, hearing her father rising, went to the gentleman, and said, "take heed, sir, for my father cometh:" the gentleman, thus suddenly alarmed, would have pulled his head out of the

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privy seat, but the hole in the seat fitted so close to his head that he pulled the seat board up in the attempt, with which, still hanging about his neck, he ran against the father and knocked him down, he being an old man

[*A few lines wanting in the original.*]

A CART LADEN WITH COALS, IN WHICH WERE two or three skittish horses; the horses seeing the gentleman coming towards them, clothed only in his shirt, with the seat of the privy about his neck, started aside, and upset the cart, whereby the coals fell out, some in one place and some in another, and the horses broke their traces, and ran some toward Smithfield and some toward Newgate; the collier immediately ran after them, but was an hour or more before he got his horses together again, by which time the people of the street were risen, and came to the place and saw it strewn with coals; every one then gathered up coals, till most part of the coals were gone before the collier had got his horses together again. During this time the gentleman went through St. Andrew's Church-yard toward Thavies Inn, and there met the sexton coming to ring the bell for morning mass, who, when he saw the gentleman in his shirt in the church-yard,

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with the privy seat about his neck, thought it was a spirit, and cried, "alas! alas! a spirit!" and ran back again to his house, and for fear was almost out of his wits, and was very bad for a long time afterward. The gentleman, then, because Thavies Inn gates were not opened, ran to the back part, and leaped over the garden wall, but in leaping the privy seat so troubled him, that he fell down into the garden, and had almost broken his neck, and there he lay still, till the principal of the Inn came into the garden, who, when he saw him lay there, thought some man had been slain and cast over the wall, and he durst not come near him until he had called up his company, which, when many of the gentlemen had come together, looked well upon him, and knew him, and then relieved him; but the seat which was about his neck had caused his head so to swell, that they could not get it off until they obtained hatchets and cut it off.

Thus was the wench well *japed*, and for fear ran away from her father; her father's arm was hurt; the collier lost his coals; the sexton was almost out of his wits; and the gentleman had almost broken his neck.

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TALE XXV.—OF THE MERCHANT'S WIFE WHO SAID SHE WOULD TAKE A NAP AT SERMON.

A merchant's wife there was in Bow parish in London, to whom her maid came on a Sunday in Lent, after dinner, and said, "mistress,' quoth she, "they ring at St. Thomas of Acres, for there shall be a sermon preached anon;" to whom the mistress answered and said, "marry, God's blessing have thy heart for warning me thereof, and because I slept not well all this night, I pray thee bring my stool with me, for I will go thither, to look whether I can take a nap there while the priest is preaching."

By this ye may see that many one goeth to church as much for other things as for devotion.

TALE XXVI.—OF THE WOMAN THAT SAID IF SHE LIVED ANOTHER YEAR SHE WOULD HAVE A CUCKOLD'S HAT OF HER OWN.

Of the above tale but a few words remain in the original.

TALE XXVII.—OF THE GENTLEMAN THAT WISHED HIS TOOTH IN THE GENTLEWOMAN'S TAIL.

A gentleman and gentlewoman sat together talking, which gentleman had great pain in

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one of his teeth, and said to the gentlewoman, "mistress, I have a tooth in my head which grieveth me very sore, wherefore I wish it were in your tail." She, hearing him say this, answered thus, "in good faith, sir, if your tooth were in my tail, it could do it but little good; but if there be anything in my tail that would do your tooth good, I wish it were in your tooth."

By this tale ye may see that a woman's answer is seldom to seek.

TALE XXVIII.—OF THE WELSHMAN THAT CONFESSED HIM HOW HE HAD SLAIN A FRIAR.

In the time of Lent, a Welshman came to be confessed of his curate, which in his confession said, that he had killed a friar; to whom the curate said, he could not absolve him; "yes," quoth the Welshman, "if thou knewest all, thou wouldst absolve me well enough;" and when the curate had commanded him to show him all the case, he said thus: "marry, there were two friars, and I might have slain both if I had list, but I let the one escape; therefore, master curate, set the one against the other, and then the offence is not so great but ye may absolve me well enough."

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By this ye may see, that divers men have so evil and large conscience, that they think if they do one good deed, or refrain from doing one evil sin, that it is satisfaction for other sins and offences.

TALE XXIX.—OF THE WELSHMAN THAT COULD NOT GET BUT A LITTLE MALE.

There was a company of gentlemen in Northamptonshire who went to hunt for deer in the neighbourhood beside Stony Stratford, among which gentlemen, there was one had a Welshman to his servant, a good archer, which when they came to a place, where they thought they should find deer, appointed this Welshman to stand still, and forbade him in any wise to shoot at no rascal deer, but to make sure of the great male, and spare not; "well," quoth this Welshman, "I will do so;" anon came by many great deer, and rascal, but ever he let them go and took no heed to them; and within an hour after, he saw, come riding on the highway, a man of the country, which had a budget hanging to his saddle-bow, and when this Welshman espied him he bade him stand, and began to draw his bow, and bade him deliver that little male, that hung at his saddle-

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bow; this man, for fear of his life, was glad to deliver him his budget, and so did, and then rode his way, and was glad he was so escaped: and when this man of the country was gone, the Welshman was very glad, and went immediately to seek his master, and at the last found him with his company; and when he saw him, he came to him and said, "there, master, by cotte's plud and her nail, I have stood yonder these two hours, and I could see never a male but a little male that a man had hanging at his saddle-bow, and that I have gotten, and lo, here it is;" then took his master the budget, which he had taken away from the aforesaid man, for the which deed, both the master and the servant were afterward in great trouble.

By this ye may learn, that it is great folly for a master to put a servant to that business whereof he can nothing skill, and wherein he hath not been used.

TALE XXX.—OF THE GENTLEWOMAN THAT SAID TO A GENTLEMAN, "YE HAVE A BEARD ABOVE, AND NONE BELOW."

A gentleman about twenty years of age, somewhat disposed to mirth and gaiety, on a

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time talked to a gentlewoman who was right wise and also merry; this gentlewoman, as she talked to him, happened to look upon his beard, which was but young, and somewhat grown upon his upper lip, and but little grown beneath, as all other young mens' beards commonly grow, and said to him, "sir, ye have a beard above, and none beneath;" and he hearing her say so, said in sport, "mistress ye have a beard beneath and none above;" "marry," quoth she, "then set the one against the other;" which answer so abashed the gentleman that he had not one word to answer.

TALE XXXI.—OF THE FRIAR WHO SAID OUR LORD FED FIVE THOUSAND PEOPLE WITH THREE FISHES.

There was a certain white friar, who was a very glutton and a great niggard, which had an ungracious boy, which ever followed him, and bare his cloak; and what for the friar's gluttony, and for his churlishness, the boy, where he went, could scarcely get meat enough, for the friar would eat almost all himself: but on a time, the friar made a sermon in the country, wherein he touched very many miracles which Christ did before his passion, among which he specially re-

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hearsed the miracle which Christ did, in feeding five thousand people with five loaves of bread and three little fishes; and this friar's boy, who cared not greatly for his master, by reason that his master was so great a churl, cried out aloud, that all the church heard, and said, "by my faith, then, there were no friars there;" which answer made all the people laugh, so that for shame, the friar went out of the * * * * * he then departed out of the church * * * *

By this ye may see that it is honest * * depart with such as he hath to them * *

TALE XXXII.—OF THE FRANKLYN THAT WOULD HAVE HAD THE FRIAR GONE.

A rich franklyn, dwelling in the county of * * * had a friar in his house, of whom he never could be rid by any means, but he would tarry by the space of a se'nnight, and would never depart, wherefore the franklyn was sore grieved and sadly weary of him. On a time, as he and his wife and the friar were together, he feigned himself very angry with his wife, insomuch that he smote her; this friar, perceiving well what they meant, said, "I have been here this sevennight when ye were

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friends, and I will tarry a fortnight longer but I will see you friends again, or I depart;" the franklyn perceiving that he could do no good, nor would not depart by none other means, answered him shortly, and said, "by God, friar, but thou shalt abide here no longer," and took him by the shoulders and thrust him out of the doors of the house.

By this ye may see, that he that will learn no good by examples in a manner to him shown, is worthy of open rebuke.

TALE XXXIII.—OF THE PRIEST THAT SAID OUR LADY WAS NOT SO CURIOUS A WOMAN.

In the town of Bottely dwelt a miller whose daughter was a comely wench, and the curate of the next town loved her, and the report was, that he had her at his pleasure. On a time this curate preached of those curious wives *now-a-days*; and whether it were for the occasion, or whether it came out, at all adventures he had penned to say thus in his sermon: "ye wives, ye be so curious in all your works, that ye wot not what ye mean, but ye should follow our Lady; our Lady was not so curious as ye be, but she was a good homely wench, like the miller's daughter at Bottely." At

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which saying all the parishioners made great laughter, and especially those who knew he loved the same wench.

By this ye may see, it is great folly in a man, that is suspected with any person, to praise or to name the same person openly, lest it bring him into further slander.

TALE XXXIV.—OF THE GOOD MAN WHO SAID TO HIS WIFE THAT HE HAD EVIL FARE.

A begging friar came into a poor man's house in the country, and because this poor man thought this friar might do him some good, he therefore thought to make him good cheer, and because his wife would dress him no good meat for cost, he therefore at dinner time said thus, "by God, wife, because thou didst dress me no good meat to my dinner, were it not for master friar, thou shouldst have half a dozen stripes;" "nay sir," quoth the friar, "I pray you spare not for me;" wherewith the wife was angry, and therefore at supper she caused them to fare worse.

TALE XXXV.—OF THE FRIAR THAT BADE HIS CHILD MAKE A LANTERN.

Only a few words of this tale remain.

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TALE XXXVI.—OF THE GENTLEMAN THAT ASKED THE FRIAR FOR HIS BROTHER.

In the term time a good old gentleman, being a lawyer, came to London to the term, and as he came, he happened to overtake a friar which was an unthrift, and went alone without his brother, wherefore this gentleman asked this friar, where was his brother that should keep him company, and said, it was contrary to his religion to go alone, and it would cause people to suppose him to be some apostate, or some unthrift. "By God, sir," quoth the friar, "my brother commendeth himself unto your mastership;" "why," quoth the gentleman, "I know him not;" "then," quoth the friar to the gentleman, "ye are the more fool to ask for him."

By this tale ye may see, that he that giveth counsel to any unthrift, and teacheth him his duty, shall have oftentimes but a mock for his labour.

TALE XXXVII.—OF THE THREE MEN WHO CHOSE THE WOMAN.

Three gentlemen came into an inn where a fair woman was tapstress, wherefore as these three were making merry each of them kissed her, and made good pastime and pleasure;

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howbeit, one spoke merrily, and said, "I cannot see how this gentlewoman is to make pastime and pleasure for us all three, except she were divided into three parts." "By my troth," said one of them, "if she be divided, I would choose for my part her head and her fair face, that I might always be kissing her." "Then," quoth the second, "I would have the breast and heart, for there lieth her love." "Then," quoth the third, "there is nothing left for me, but the loins, buttocks, and legs, I am content to have them for my part." And when these gentlemen had passed an hour or two there, they took their leave and were going away; but, before they went out, the third man, who had chosen the belly and buttocks, did kiss the tapstress, and bade her farewell; when the man, who had chosen her face, said, "why dost thou so? thou dost me wrong to kiss the part I had chosen." "O," quoth the other, "I pray thee be not angry, I am content that thou shalt kiss my part for it."

TALE XXXVIII.—OF THE GENTLEMAN WHO TAUGHT HIS COOK THE MEDICINE FOR THE TOOTH ACHE.

In Essex there dwelt a merry gentleman, who had a cook called Thomas, who was

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greatly troubled with the tooth-ache, and he complained to his master thereof, who said that he had a book of medicines, and that he would look into this book, and see if he could find any medicine therein for the tooth-ache; and he then sent one of his daughters to his study for this book, and he immediately looked into it, and for a long season, and then said thus to his cook, "Thomas, here is a medicine for your tooth-ache, and it is a charm, but it will do you no good unless you kneel on your knees and ask it for St. Charity." This man, glad to be released of his pain, kneeled, and said, "master, for St. Charity let me have that medicine;" "then," quoth the gentleman, "kneel on your knees, and say after me—"The Son on the Monday;" quoth Thomas, "the Son on the Monday;"—"the Trinity on the Tuesday;" "the Trinity on the Tuesday;"—"the wit on the Wednesday;" "the wit on the Wednesday;"—"the holy, holy Thursday;" "the holy, holy Thursday;"—"and all that fast on Friday;" "and all that fast on Friday;"—"s * * in thy mouth on Saturday." This Thomas, (the cook), hearing his master thus mocking him, in anger started up, and said, "by God's body, mocking churl, I will never do thee service more," and went forth to

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his chamber to get his clothes together, intending to have gone thence by and by; but, from the anger that he took against his master for mocking him, and the labor of getting his things together so quickly, the pain of the tooth-ache went from him immediately: his master then came to him, and made him tarry, telling him that his charm was the cause of the tooth-ache leaving him.

By this tale ye may see that anger often times putteth away bodily pain.

TALE XXXIX.—OF THE GENTLEMAN WHO PROMISED THE SCHOLAR OF OXFORD A SARCENET TIPPET,

A scholar of Oxford, lately made Master of Arts, came into the city of London, and in Paul's met the said merry gentleman of Essex, (who was ever disposed to play many merry pageants), with whom, before, he had been of familiar acquaintance, and prayed him to give him a sarcenet tippet. This gentleman, more liberal of promise than of gift, promised him he should have one if he would come to his lodging, to the sign of the Bull, without Bishopsgate, in the next morning at six of the clock. This scholar thanked him, and for that night departed to his lodging in Fleet

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Street, and in the morning early, as he appointed, came to him to the sign of the Bull; and as this gentleman saw him, he bade him go with him into the city, and he should be sped anon; and they immediately went together, till they came in to St. Lawrence Church in the Jury, where the gentleman espied a priest going to mass, and told the scholar, that yonder is the priest that hath the tippet for you, and bid him kneel down in the pew, and he should speak to him for it. And this gentleman went to the priest, and said, "sir, here is a scholar, a kinsman of mine, greatly diseased with the chin-cough, I pray you, when mass is done, give him three draughts of your chalice." The priest granted him, and turning to the scholar, said, "sir, I shall serve you as soon as mass is done;" the scholar then tarried still, and heard the mass, trusting that when the mass was done, that the priest would give him his tippet of sarcenet. This gentleman, in the meanwhile, departed out of the church. This priest, when mass was done, put wine in the chalice, and came to the scholar, kneeling in the pew, and proffering him to drink of the chalice; the scholar looked upon him, and mused, and said, "why, master parson, wherefore proffer ye me

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the chalice:" "marry," quoth the priest, "for the gentleman told me ye were diseased with the chincough, and prayed me, therefore, that for a medicine, ye might drink of the chalice:" "nay, by St. Mary," quoth the scholar, "he promised me ye should deliver me a tippet of sarcenet;" "nay," quoth the priest, "he spoke to me of no tippet, but he desired me to give you drink of the chalice, for the chincough;" "by God's body," quoth the scholar, "he is, as he was ever wont to be, but a mocking wretch, and ever I live I shall quit him;" and so departed out of the church in great anger.

By this tale ye may perceive it is no wisdom for a man to trust to a man to do a thing that is contrary to his old accustomed conditions.

TALE XL.—OF MASTER SKELTON, WHO BROUGHT THE BISHOP OF NORWICH TWO PHEASANTS.

It happened there was a great variance between the bishop of Norwich and one Master Skelton, a poet laureate, insomuch that the bishop commanded him that he should not come in his gates: so this Master Skelton did absent himself for a long season; but at last, he thought to do his duty to him, and studied how he might obtain the bishop's favour, and

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determined that he would come to him with some present, and humble himself to the bishop; so he got a couple of pheasants, and came to the bishop's place, and requested the porter to let him come in to speak to my lord; this porter, knowing his lord's pleasure, would not suffer him to come in at the gates; wherefore went Master Skelton to the back side, to seek some other way of coming to the place. But the place was moated, so that he could see no way of coming over, except where there lay a long tree over the moat, in manner of a bridge: wherefore this Master Skelton went upon the tree to get over, and when he was almost over, his foot slipped, and he fell into the moat up to the middle; but at last he recovered himself, and dried himself again as well as he could, and suddenly appeared before the bishop, who was in his hall, being lately risen from his dinner; who, when he saw Skelton coming, said, "why how now, caitiff, I warned thee thou should never come in at my gate, and commanded the porter to keep thee out:" "forsooth my lord," said Skelton, "though ye gave such charge, and though your gates be never so surely kept, yet, it is no how possible to keep me out of your doors than it is crows and pyes, for I came not in at

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your gates, but over the moat, and have been almost drowned for my labour:" and he showed his clothes, how evil he was arrayed, which caused many who stood by to laugh. "Then," said Skelton, "if it please your lordship, I have brought you, for your supper, a couple of pheasants;" "nay," said the bishop, "I defy thee and thy pheasants also, wretch as thou art; get thee out of my house, for I will none of thy gift." * * * * * * Skelton then, considering that the bishop had often called him fool, said to one of his familiars who stood by, that though it was evil to be christened a fool, yet it was much worse to be confirmed a fool of a bishop, for the name of confirmation must needs abide; therefore he thought how he might escape that confirmation, and mused awhile, and at last said to the bishop, "if your lordship knew the name of these pheasants, ye would be content to take them;" "why caitiff," said the bishop, hastily and angrily, "what are their names?" "why my lord," said Skelton, "this pheasant is called Alpha, which is, *in primis*, the first; and this is called O, that is, *novissimus*, the last; and for the more plain understanding of my mind, if it please your lordship to take them, I promise you this Alpha is the first

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that ever I gave you, and this O is the last that ever I will give you while I live." At which answer all that were by made great laughter, and they all desired the bishop to be good unto him for his merry conceits, at which earnest entreaty, the bishop was content to take him into his favor again.

By this tale ye may see, that merry conceits do a man more good than to fret himself with anger and melancholy.

TALE XLI.—OF THE YEOMAN OF THE GUARD, WHO SAID HE WOULD BEAT THE CARTER.

A yeoman of the king's guard, dwelling in a village beside London, had a very fair young wife, to whom a carter of the town, a merry fellow, resorted, and lay with her divers times when her husband was on guard; and this was so openly known that all the town spoke of it. Now, a certain young man of the town, well acquainted with this yeoman, told him that such a carter had lain with his wife; to whom this yeoman of the guard swore, by God's body, that if he met with him it should go hard but he would beat him well. "Oh!" quoth the young man, "if ye go straight, *even now*, the right way, ye shall overtake him

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driving a cart towards London, laden with hay:" wherefore the yeoman of the guard immediately rode after the carter, and within a short space overtook him, and knew him well enough, and immediately called the carter to him, and said, "sirrah, I understand thou dost lie every night with my wife, when I am from home." This carter, being nothing afraid of him, answered, "yea, marry, what then?" "What then!" quoth the yeoman, "by God's heart, hadst thou not told me the truth, I wouldst have broken thy head:" and so the yeoman of the guard returned, and no hurt done, and no stroke stricken or offered.

By this ye may see that oftimes the greatest boasters, when it cometh to the proof, be the greatest cowards.

TALE XLII.—OF THE FOOL THAT SAID HE HAD RATHER GO TO HELL THAN HEAVEN.

A fool there was, dwelling with a gentleman in the country who was called a great tyrant, and an extortioner; but this fool loved his master marvellously, because he cherished him so well. It happened—

[*A few lines wanting.*]

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to heaven, for I had rather go to hell;" then the other asked him, why he had rather go to hell? "By my troth," said the fool, "I will go with my master, and I am sure my master will go to hell, for every man saith he shall go to the devil, and therefore I will go thither with him."

TALE XLIII.—OF THE PLOUGHMAN'S SON, WHO SAID HE SAW ONE MAKE A GOOSE SING SWEETLY.

There was a certain ploughman's son in the country, sixteen years of age, who never went much into company, but always went to plough and husbandry. On a time this young lad went to a wedding with his father, where he saw one playing upon a lute; and when he came home at night, his mother asked him what sport he had seen at the wedding? this lad answered her, "by my troth, mother, there was one brought a goose in his arms, and tickled her so upon the neck, that she sang the sweetest that I ever heard goose to sing in my life."

TALE XLIV.—OF THE MAID'S ANSWER THAT WAS WITH CHILD.

At a merchant's house in London there was a maid who was pregnant, to whom the mis-

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tress of the house came and demanded of her, who was the father of the child? to whom the maid answered, "forsooth, nobody:" "why," quoth the mistress, "it is not possible but some man must be the father of it:" to whom the maid answered, "why, mistress, may not I have a child without a man, as well as hens lay eggs without a cock."

By this ye may see it is hard to find a woman without an excuse.

TALE XLV.—OF THE SERVANT WHO RHYMED WITH HIS MASTER.

A gentleman there was who lived nigh Kingston-upon-Thames, while riding in the country with his servant, (who was not the quickest fellow, but rode always sadly by his master's side, and uttered very few words,) said to him, "wherefore ridest thou so sadly? I would have thee tell me some tale to beguile the time with:" "by my troth, master," quoth he, "I can tell no tale:" "then," said the master, "canst thou not sing?" "by my troth," quoth he, "I could never sing in all my life:" "then," quoth the master, "canst thou rhyme?" "no, by my troth, I cannot," quoth he, "but if ye begin to rhyme I will follow as well as I can:"

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"by my troth," said the master, "that is well, therefore I will begin to make a rhyme, and let me see how well thou canst follow thy master;" meanwhile he began to rhyme thus:

"Many men's swans swim in Thames, so do mine."

Quoth the servant,

"And many a man lyeth by other men's wives, and so do I by thine."

"What dost thou, whoreson?" quoth the master: "nothing," quoth he, "but make up the rhyme;" "but," quoth the master, "I charge thee tell me why thou sayest so?" "forsooth, master," quoth he, "for nothing in the world but to make up your rhyme:" "then," quoth the master, "if thou doest for nothing else I am content." So the master forgave him his saying, although, peradventure, he said truth.

TALE XLVI.—OF THE WELSHMAN WHO DELIVERED THE LETTER TO THE APE.

[*A few lines wanting.*]

And commanded his servant shortly to bring him an answer. This Welshman came to the chief justice's place, and at the gate saw an ape sitting, in a coat made for him, as they

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used to apparel apes for sport. This Welshman then made courtesy to the ape, and said, "my master recommendeth him to my lord, your father, and sendeth him a letter." This ape took the letter, and looked at it, and then at the man, making grimaces as is the nature of apes to do: this Welshman, because he understood him not, came again to his master, according to his commands, and told him he delivered the letter to the son of the chief justice, who was at the gate in a fur coat: and his master asked him what answer he brought; the man said he gave him an answer, but it was either French or Latin, for he understood it not; "but, sir," said he, "ye need not fear, for I saw in his countenance so much, that I warrant he will do your errand to my lord, his father." This gentleman, trusting to him, made no further inquiries, for lack of which the servant, who had done the felony, within a month after, was arraigned at the King's Bench, and cast, and hung.

By this ye may see, that every wise man ought to take heed not to send a foolish servant upon a hasty message, that is of consequence.

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TALE XLVII.—OF HIM WHO SOLD NOTHING.

There was a certain man who offered to sell a dagger to another man, who answered, he had nothing to give him for it; then the other said, that he should have the dagger, upon condition that he should give unto him, within three days, "nothing, or forty shillings;" with that the other was content. This being agreed on, he that was to deliver *nothing* took no thought until the appointed time drew near, when he began to think how he should deliver this man nothing; and, first, he thought on a feather, a straw, a pin's point, and other things, but nothing could he devise; therefore he became sad and pensive, for fear of losing his forty shillings, and could neither sleep nor take rest; therefore his wife demanded the cause of his heaviness, and after many denials told her all. "Well, sir," said she, "let me alone, and go from the town, and I shall manage this matter well enough." This man, following his wife's counsel—

[*A few lines wanting.*]

"therefore, sir," said she, "put your hand in that pot and take your money:" then was this man glad, and supposing to have taken his money, thrust his hand through the pot

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up to his elbow: "well, sir," said the wife, "what have you there?" "marry," said he, "nothing:" "then, sir," said she, "you have your bargain, and my husband has paid for his dagger, according to his promise."

By this ye may see, that woman's wit, at an extremity, is much better than a man's.

TALE XLVIII.—OF THE FRIAR WHO TOLD THE CHILDREN'S FORTUNES.

There was a begging friar, who went a begging to a certain town, wherein dwelt a rich man, of whom he never could get the value of a halfpenny, yet he thought he would go there and try him. And as he went, the wife, who was standing at the door, perceived him, and thinking he was coming there, ran in, and bad the children, if the friar asked for her, say she was not within. The friar, seeing her run in, and suspecting the cause, came to the door, and asked for her, the children, as they were bidden, said she was not within. Then he stood still, looking on the children, and at last called to him the eldest, and bad him let him see his hand; and when he saw it, "O Jesu," said he, "what fortune is ordained for thee!" and he asked the second son to

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show him his hand, and when he saw it, said, "O Jesu! what destiny is prepared for thee!" then he looked in the third son's hand, and said, "O God! thy destiny is hardest of all!" and with that went away; but the wife hearing these things, ran and called after the friar, and prayed him to come in and sit down, and she sat before him what food she had; and when he had eaten and drank, she besought him to tell her the destinies of her children, which, after many difficulties, he did, and that the first should be a beggar, the second a thief, and the third a homicide; which, she hearing, fell down in a swoon and grieved sorely. The friar comforted her, and said, that though these were their fortunes there might be some remedy, then she besought him to counsel her: "then," said the friar, "you must make the eldest, that shall be a beggar, a friar; and the second, that shall be a thief, a man of law; and the third, that shall be the homicide, a physician."

By this tale ye may learn, that they who will come to the speech or presence of any one for their own cause, they must first endeavour to show such matter as those persons most delight in.

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TALE XLIX.—OF THE BOY WHO BARE TO THE FRIAR HIS MASTER'S MONEY.

[*A few lines wanted.*]

"ye," said the friar. Then went the man to the boy, and said, "sir, thy master bids thee give me forty pence;" "I will not," said the boy; then called the man with a high voice to the friar, and said, "sir, he says he will not;" "then," said the friar, "beat him;" and when the boy heard his master say so, he gave the man the forty pence.

By this tale ye may see, that it is folly for a man to say yes, or no, to a thing, except he know surely what the matter is.

TALE L.—OF PHILLIP SPENCER, THE BUTCHER'S MAN.

A certain butcher, dwelling in St. Nicholas Flesh-shambles in London, called Poule, had a servant named Peter. This Peter was at church on a Sunday, hearing mass, when one of his fellows, named Philip Spencer, was sent to call him, by command of his master. So it happened that at the time the curate preached, and in his sermon, touched many authorities of the Holy Scriptures: among other words of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philipians, how we are not only bound to believe in Christ, but

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also to suffer for his sake, he said these words in the pulpit, "what sayeth Paul in the Philipians to this?" this young man, called Philip Spencer, thinking he spoke to him, answered shortly, "marry, sir, he bad Peter come home, and take part of a pudding, for he should go for a calf soon." The curate, hearing this, was abashed, and all the audience made great laughter.

By this ye may see, that it is no token of a wise man to give an answer to a question suddenly, before he knows surely what the matter is.

TALE LI.—OF THE COURTIER AND THE CARTER.

There came a courtier by a carter, and who, in derision, praised the carter's back, legs, and other members of his body marvellously, which jesting the carter perceiving, said, he had another property which the courtier had not espied in him; and when he demanded what it was, the carter looked aside, over his shoulder, and said, "see, sir, this is my property; I have a wall eye in my head, for I never look over my shoulder in this way, but that I espy a knave."

By this tale a man may see that he who

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derides and mocks others is often more mocked and derided himself.

TALE LII.—OF THE YOUNG MAN WHO PRAYED HIS FELLOW TO TEACH HIM HIS PATER NOSTER.

A young man, twenty years of age, rude and unlearned, in the time of Lent, came to his curate to be confessed, but when he was examined of his life it was found he could not say his pater noster, therefore his confessor exhorted him to learn it, and showed him what a holy and good prayer it was, and the effect thereof, and the seven petitions therein contained: "the 1st, *Sanctificetur*—hallowed be thy name: the 2nd, *adveniat regnam, &c.*—thy kingdom come: the 3rd, *fiat voluntas, &c.*—thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven: the 4th, *panem nostrum, &c.*—give us our daily sustenance always, and help us as we help those who have need for us: the 5th, *dimitte, &c.*—forgive us our sins done to thee as we forgive them that trespass against us: the 6th, *et ne nos*—let us not be overcome with evil temptations: the 7th, *sed libera, &c.*—but deliver us from all evil; amen." And then his confessor, after this exposition to him, enjoined him, for penance, to fast every Friday on bread and

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water, till he had his pater noster well learned, This young man, meekly accepting his penance, departed, and came home to one of his companions, and said to him, "my ghostly father hath given me penance to fast every Friday on bread and water, till I can say my pater noster; therefore I pray thee teach me my pater noster, and I will teach thee a song of Robin Hood, that shall be worthy twenty of it."

By this tale ye may know the effect of the holy prayer of the pater noster.

TALE LIII.—OF THE FRIAR THAT PREACHED IN RHYME EXPOUNDING THE AVE MARIA.

There was a certain friar, who, upon our Lady-day, the Annunciation, made a sermon in the White Friars, in London, and began his anti-text as follows: "Ave Maria gracia plena dominus tecum, &c. These words," said the friar, "were spoken by the angel, Gabriel, to our Lady when she conceived Christ; which is, in our mother tongue, to say, all hail, Mary! blessed thou art, the son of God is with thee: and further, the angel said, thou shalt conceive and bare a son, and shalt call his name Jesus; and Elizabeth, thy cousin, shalt also

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conceive the sweet St. John;" and so proceeded in his sermon, in such sweet rhyme, that many gentlemen of the court, who were there, began to smile and laugh: the friar, perceiving this, said, "masters, I pray you listen, I will tell you a narrative: there was once a young priest, who was not the best clerk, who said mass, and read a collect thus; Deus qui vigenti filii tui, &c.; wherefore he should have said, vigeniti filii tui, &c.; and after mass was done, there was such a gentleman as one of you had heard this mass, and came to the priest, and said, 'sir, I pray you tell me how many sons had God Almighty?' said the priest, 'why ask you that?' 'marry, sir,' said the gentleman, 'I suppose he had twenty sons. for ye said just now, Deus qui viginti filii tui:' the priest, perceiving he mocked him, answered, 'how many sons so ever God Almighty had, I am sure thou art not one of them, for thou scornest the word of God.' And so," said the friar in the pulpit, "no more are ye God's children, for ye scorn and laugh at me now, who preach to you the word of God."

[*A few lines wanting.*]

perceive well, that the best, the wisest, and

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most holy matter, by fond pronunciation and utterance, may be marred, and shall not edify to the audience; therefore, every process should be uttered with words and countenance suitable to the occasion. Also by this tale, they that are unlearned in the Latin tongue, may learn the substance of the Ave Maria.

TALE LIV.—OF THE CURATE THAT PREACHED THE ARTICLES OF THE CREED.

In a village in Warwickshire was a parish priest, who, though he was no great clerk nor graduate of the University, yet preached to his parishioners on a Sunday, declaring to them the twelve articles of the Creed, showing them that the first article was, "to believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; the second, to believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, coequal to the Father in all things pertaining to the deity; the third, that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; the fourth, that he suffered death under Pontius Pilate, and that he was crucified, dead, and buried; the fifth, that he descended to hell, and set out the good souls who died in faith and hope, and the third day rose from death to life; the sixth, he ascended

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into heaven, to the right side of God the Father, where he sitteth; the seventh, that he shall come at the day of doom to judge us that be quick, and those that are dead; the eighth, to believe in the Holy Ghost, equal God with the Father and the Son; the ninth, in the Holy Church Catholic, and in the Communion of Saints; the tenth, in the remission of sins; the eleventh, in the resurrection general of body and soul; the twelfth, in everlasting life, that God shall reward those who are good:"—and he said further to his parishioners, "these articles ye are bound to believe, for they are true authority; and if ye believe not me, for a more sufficient authority go to Coventry, and there ye shall see them all in the play, Corpus Christi."

By reading this tale, those who understand not Latin may know the articles of the faith.

TALE LV.—OF THE FRIAR WHO PREACHED THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

A beggar of the Grey Friars in London, which preached in a village in the country, in the time of his wandering, preached a sermon he had learned by heart, that of declaring the

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ten commandments; first, to believe in one God, and to honour him above all things; the second, to swear not in vain by him nor any of his creatures; the third, to abstain from worldly business on the holy day, thou and all the servants of whom thou hast charge; the fourth, to honour thy parents, and to help them in their necessity; the fifth, to slay no man by deed, nor will, nor for hatred hurt his body or good name; the sixth, to do no actual fornication, nor indulge in any unholy desires; the seventh, to steal not—

[*A few lines wanting.*]

to covet nor desire our neighbours' goods unlawfully: and because this friar preached this sermon so often, one who heard it told the friar's servant, that his master was called friar John Ten Commandments; wherefore this servant told his master, and advised him to preach some other sermon, for it grieved him to hear his master so derided, for every man knows what ye will say, as soon as ye begin, for ye have preached it so often; "why then," said the friar, "I am sure thou knowest the commandments who hast heard them so often!" "yes," said the servant, "I do:" then said the friar, "repeat them to me;" "they are," said

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the servant, "pride, covetousness, sloth, envy, wrath, gluttony, and lechery."

By reading this tale ye may know the ten commandments and the seven deadly sins.

TALE LVI.—OF THE WIFE WHO BADE HER HUSBAND EAT THE CANDLE FIRST.

The husband said to the wife thus, "by this candle I dreamed this night I was a cuckold;" to whom the wife answered, "by this bread you are none;" then said he to the wife, "eat the bread;" she answered to her husband, "then eat you the candle, for you swear first."

By this tale ye may see that a woman's answer is never to seek.

TALE LVII.—OF THE ANSWER OF THE LAWYER'S SON.

A woman demanded of a little child, son of a lawyer, what craft his father was? and the child said, his father was a crafty man of law.

By this tale ye may see that sometimes young children speak the truth unadvisedly.

TALE LVIII.—OF THE FRIAR IN THE PULPIT, WHO BADE THE WOMAN CEASE HER BABBLING.

In a certain parish church in London, after the old laudable and accustomed manner, there

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was a begging friar, who, though he was not the best clerk, nor could make the best sermons, yet, by license of the curate, he preached to the parishioners. At that time among the audience was a woman, little disposed to contemplation, talking with a gossip of hers, so loud, that the friar was somewhat disturbed therewith, and to whom he openly spake, and said, "thou woman, there, in the tawny gown, hold thy peace, and cease thy babbling, thou troublest the word of God;" the woman, ashamed at being so openly rebuked before all the people, answered, "I beshrew his heart, that babbleth more of us two;" at which saying all the people laughed, as they felt but little benefit from his sermon.

By this tale a man may learn to beware how he openly rebuketh another, lest it turn to his own reproof.

TALE LIX.—OF THE WELSHMAN WHO CAST THE SCOT INTO THE SEA.

[*First few lines wanting.*]

They took many enterprises, and many ships, and many prisoners of other realms, who were their enemies, among which they happened to take a Scotch ship, and many Scotchmen they

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slew, and took prisoners; and among them was a Welshman, who held a Scotch prisoner, and bid him take off his harness; but the Scot was very unwilling; however, for fear, at last he pulled it off with very ill will, and said to the Welshman, "if you will have my harness take it: there," and cast it into the sea; which, the Welshman seeing, said, "by cottes plut and her nail, I will make thee fetch it again;" and took him by the legs, and cast him overboard into the sea.

By this this tale ye may learn, that he who is subjected to another, should leave his own will, and follow his who hath command, lest it turn to his own disadvantage.

TALE LX.—OF THE MAN WHO HAD THE DUMB WIFE.

There was a man married a woman who had great riches and beauty, but had an impediment of nature, for she was dumb, which made him very sorrowful; but, as he was one day walking and thinking of it, there came one to him, and asked him why was the cause of his heaviness; and he said, it was because his wife was born dumb; to whom the other said, "I will give thee a remedy; take an aspen leaf, and lay under her tongue when she is asleep,

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and I warrant she will speak to-morrow;" and the man was glad, and gathered aspen leaves, and put under her tongue when she slept. And on the morrow when he himself awaked, desirous of knowing how the medicine wrought, demanded of her, how she did; she answered, "I thank thee for awakening me so early;" and so by virtue of that medicine she was restored to speech; but, in conclusion, her speech so increased day by day, and she was so cursed of condition, and brawled, and chid with her husband so much, that at last he was more vexed, and had more trouble with her shrewd words than he had before when she was dumb, wherefore, as he was walking another time abroad, he chanced again to meet the person who taught—

[*A few lines wanting.*]

"and more weary of her now, than I was when she was dumb; so, I pray thee, give me a medicine to modify her, that she may not speak so much:" the other answered, "sir, I am a devil of hell, but one that hast the least power, and though I have power to make a woman speak, yet, if she once begin to speak, I nor all the devils in hell have power to stop her speaking."

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By this tale ye may see, that a man often desireth what afterwards turns to his own displeasure.

TALE LXI.—OF THE PROCTOR OF ARCHES WHO HAD A LITTLE WIFE.

One asked a procter of the arches, who was lately married, why he chose so little a wife; who answered he had a text saying thus, "ex duobus malis minus malis est eliendum," that is to say, in English, "among evil things the least is to be chosen."

TALE LXII.—OF TWO NUNS THAT WERE SHRIVEN OF ONE PRIEST.

In the time of Lent there came two nuns to St. John's, in London, because of the great pardon, there to be confessed; of the which nuns, one was a young lady, and the other was old. The young lady first chose her confessor, and confessed to him she had sinned in lechery; the confessor asked her with whom it was; she said it was with a lusty gallant; he then demanded where it was; she said, in a pleasant green arbour: he asked further, when it was; she answered, in the merry month of May. Then said the confessor thus, "a fair young lady with a lusty gallant, in a pleasant

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arbour, in the merry month of May! now by my truth, ye did but your kind, so God forgive you, and I do." So she departed, and immediately after the old nun met her, and asked how she liked her confessor? she said he was the best ghostly father that ever she had, and the most easy in penance giving. This so comforted the old nun that she went to the same confessor, and showed him likewise that she had sinned in lechery: and he demanded with whom; she said with an old friar: he asked where; she said, in an old cloister: he asked at what season; she said in Lent. Then the priest said, "an old whore to be with an old friar, in an old cloister, in the holy time of Lent; by cock's body, if God forgive thee, yet will I never forgive thee;" which words made her depart all sad and sore abashed.

By this tale men may learn, that a vicious act is more abominable in one person than in another, in one season than in another, and in one place than another.

TALE LXIII.—OF THE ESQUIRE WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE A KNIGHT.

[*First few lines wanting.*]

And the trumpets began to blow, a young

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squire of England, riding on a fleet courser, which horse the noise of the trumpets so inflamed, that the squire could not restrain him, so that, against his will, he ran upon his enemies; and the squire, seeing no other remedy, set his spear in the rest, and rode through the thickest of his enemies, and had the good fortune to escape without hurt: and the English host followed, and gained the victory. When the field was won, King Edward called the squire, and bade him kneel down, and he would make him a knight, because he valiantly fought, and with the greatest courage adventured first upon the enemy; to whom the squire answered, "if it please your grace to make any one knight, I pray thee make my horse knight, and not me, for it was his deed and not mine, but sore against my will;" when the king heard this, he refrained to promote him, esteeming him as no better than a coward, and ever after showed him less favour.

By this tale a man may learn, that it is wisdom when he is in favour to retain it, and in no wise to disparage himself too much.

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TALE LXIV.—OF THE MAN WHO WOULD GET THE MASTERY OF HIS WIFE.

A young man, newly married, thought it good policy to get the mastery of his wife in the beginning; coming to her one day, when the pot on the fire was boiling, although the meat was not enough done, suddenly commanded her to take it off; but she answered, "the meat is not ready to eat;" and he said again, "I will have it taken off for my pleasure;" the good woman, not willing to offend him, set the pot beside the fire as he bad her; and he again commanded her to set the pot behind the door; and she said, "ye are not wise therein;" but he answered, "it should be precisely as he wished;" and she again in a gentle manner obeyed him. This man, not yet satisfied, commanded her to set the pot high upon the hen-roost; "what," said the wife, "I fear ye are mad;" but he fiercely bid her put it there, or she should repent it: the wife, afraid of moving his patience, took a ladder, and set it against the roost, and went herself, and took the pot in her hand, praying her husband to hold the ladder to prevent it slipping, which he did, and when he looked up and saw the pot standing there so high, he

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said, "there now, it stands as I would have it. This wife hearing—

[*A few lines wanting.*]

TALE LXV.—OF THE PENITENT WHO SAID "THE SHEEP OF GOD HAVE MERCY UPON ME."

A certain confessor, in the holy time of Lent, enjoined his penitent to say daily, for his penance, this prayer, "Agnus Dei miserere mei;" which is in English, "the Lamb of God have mercy upon me." This penitent, accepting his penance, departed; and twelve months afterwards he came again to be confessed of the same confessor, who demanded of him, if he had fulfilled the penance he enjoined the last year, who answered, "I thank God, sir, I have fulfilled it, for I have said this morning, and daily, the Sheep of God have mercy upon me;" Then the confessor said, "I bid thee say Agnus Dei miserere mei," that is, the Lamb of God have mercy upon me;" "yes, sir," said the penitent, "ye say truly, that was last year, but now it is a twelvemonth since, and it is a sheep by this time, so that I must needs say now, the Sheep of God have mercy upon me."

By this tale ye may perceive, that if the Scriptures are expounded to the lay people only in the literal sense, it can do little good.

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TALE LXVI.—OF THE HUSBAND THAT SAID HE WAS JOHN DAWE.

It happened that several were conversing, among whom there were a curate or parish priest, and one John Dawe, a parishioner of his, which two were more busy in conversation than others, in this manner. This priest thought that one might not, by feeling, know one from another in the dark. John Dawe was of the contrary opinion, and laid with his curate a wager of forty pence; whereupon the priest, willing to prove his wager, went to this John Dawe's house in the evening, and suddenly got into bed with his wife; then, when he began to be somewhat busy, she, feeling his crown, said with a loud voice, "by God thou art not John Dawe." That hearing, her husband answered, "thou sayest truth, wife, I am here, John Dawe; therefore, master parson, give me the money, for ye have lost your forty pence."

By this tale ye may learn to perceive, that it is not wisdom for a man to be so covetous of winning of any wager, as to put in jeopardy a thing that may turn him to greater displeasure.

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TALE LXVII.—OF THE SCHOLAR OF OXFORD WHO PROVED BY SOPHISTRY TWO CHICKENS TO BE THREE.

A rich franklin in the country, having by his wife but one child, for the great affection he bare him, sent him to Oxford to school for the space of two or three years. This young scholar, in a vacation, came home to his father; and one night, as they were

[*A few lines wanting.*]

"I have studied sophistry, and by that science I can prove that these two chickens in the dish are three chickens." "Marry," said the father, "that I should like to see;" then the scholar took one of the chickens in his hand, and said, "see, here is one chicken;" and immediately took the other with it, and said, "here are two chickens, and one and two are three; ergo, here are three chickens." Then the father took one to himself and gave the other to his wife, and said thus, "I will have one of the chickens to my part, and thy mother shall have another; and, because of thy good argument, thou shalt have the third for thy supper, for thou wilt get no more meat this time;" which promise the father kept; and so the scholar went without his supper.

By this tale a man may see that it is great

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folly to put one to learn any subtle science who hath no natural wit.

TALE LXVIII.—OF THE FRIAR WHO STOLE THE PUDDING.

A friar of London, in the summer season, came early one Sunday morning from London to Barnet to make a collection, and was there an hour before high mass began; and because he would come to the church honestly, went first to an ale-house, to wipe his shoes and make himself clean. In the which house there were puddings to sell, and divers folks breaking their fast and eating puddings; but the friar broke his fast in a secret place in the same house. This friar soon after came to the church, and, by license of the curate, entered into the pulpit to make a sermon; and, in his sermon, he rebuked sorely those who met to break their fast on the Sunday before high mass, and said "it was called the devil's black breakfast." And as he spoke, and cast out his arms to make impression, there fell a pudding out of his sleeve, which he had stolen a little while before from the ale-house; and when the people saw that, especially those who brake their fast there the same morning, and knew the wife had one of her puddings stolen, they

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laughed so much at the friar that he immediately went out of the pulpit for shame.

By this tale a man may see that when a preacher doth rebuke any sin or vice of which he is known to be guilty himself, such preaching but little edifieth his hearers.

TALE LXIX.—OF THE FRANKLYN'S SON WHO CAME TO TAKE ORDERS.

A certain scholar, wishing to be made a priest, which had neither wit nor learning, came to the bishop to take orders. The bishop perceived his foolishness; but, being a rich man's son, would not very strongly oppose him, but proposed to him this question:—"Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet: now, tell me who was Japhet's father?" But the scholar was confounded and knew not what to answer; therefore the bishop said "go home and consider awhile, and come again and solve me this question, and thou shalt have orders." So this scholar came home, and showed his father the cause of the hindrance of his orders; but his father, being angry at his foolishness, thought to teach him the solution of this question by a familiar example, and called his spaniels before him, and said, "thou

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knowest Colle, my dog, had these three whelps, Ryg, Trygg, and Tryboll, must not all my dogs needs be sire to Tryboll?" "Then," said the scholar, "by God, father, ye say truly; let me alone now, ye shall see me do well enough next time;" and on the morrow he went to the bishop again, and said he could solve his question. "Then," said the bishop, "Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet: now, tell me who was Japhet's father?" "marry, sir," quoth the scholar, "if it please your lordship, Colle, my father's dog."

By this tale ye may learn that it is lost time to teach a fool anything he has not sense to understand.

TALE LXX.—OF THE HUSBANDMAN WHO LODGED THE FRIAR IN HIS OWN BED.

It happened in the country, that late one evening a friar came to a poor man's house desiring lodgings; and the man being glad to lodge a friar, and for want of other beds, lodged him in his own. And the friar being asleep, the man and his wife went and lay in the same bed; and in the morning the poor man went to the market, leaving the friar in bed with his wife; and as he went he laughed

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to himself, and his neighbours asked him why he laughed? "I laugh," said he, "to think how shamefaced the friar will be when he wakes and finds himself in bed with my wife."

By this tale a man may learn that he who overshooteth himself does foolishly, but he is a greater fool to show it openly.

TALE LXXI.—OF THE PRIEST WHO WOULD SAY TWO GOSPELS FOR A GROAT.

Formerly there lived in Stratford-upon-Avon a priest of small learning, who undevoutly sang mass frequently twice in one day. So it happened on a time, after his second mass was done, there met him, not a mile from Stratford, divers merchantmen who would have heard mass, and desired him to sing mass, and he should have a groat. But the priest said, "sirs, I will say mass no more this day, but I will say you two gospels for a groat, and that is dog-cheap a mass as any in England."

This tale showeth that the rude and unlearned regard but little the merit and goodness of holy prayer

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TALE LXXII.—OF THE COURTIER WHO CAST THE FRIAR OVER THE BOAT.

This tale is in the original too much damaged to decipher.

TALE LXXIII.—OF THE FRIAR WHO PREACHED WHAT MEN'S SOULS WERE.

A preacher, who preached the word of God, among other matters spake of men's souls, and said, that the soul was so subtle a thing, that a thousand souls might dance on the space of a man's finger nail. Among the audience, there was a merry conceited fellow, of small devotion, who said, "master doctor, if a thousand souls may dance on a man's nail, I pray you where shall the piper stand?"

By this tale ye may see, that it is folly to show or to teach virtue to those who take no pleasure or mind thereto.

TALE LXXIV.—OF THE HUSBAND THAT CRIED BLÉ UNDER THE BED.

In London there was a certain artificer, having a fair wife, after whom a lusty gallant made pursuit to accomplish his pleasure. This, the woman denied, and told the matter unto her husband, who, much moved thereat,

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bad his wife appoint him a time to come secretly to lie with her all night; and with great boasts and oaths, sware, that against his coming he would be ready harnessed, and would put him in jeopardy of his life, unless he would make him great amends. The night was then appointed, at which time the gallant came at the appointed hour, and entered into the chamber: he then set his two-handed sword down, and said these words, "stand thou there, thou sword, the death of three men." This husband, lying under the bed in harness, hearing these words, lay still for fear. The gallant anon gat him into bed, with the wife, and went about his proposed business; and within about an hour or two, the husband, being weary of lying, began to move; the gallant. that hearing, asked the wife, what thing that was that moved under the bed; who excusing the matter, said, it was a little sheep, that was wont daily to go about the house; and the husband, that hearing, anon, cried *blé* as if it had been a sheep: and so in conclusion, when the gallant saw his time, he rose, and kissed the wife, and took his leave and departed. As soon as he was gone, the husband arose, and when the wife looked on him, somewhat abashed, and begun to make a sad coun-

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tenance, and to say, "alas! sir, why did you—

[*The end is wanting.*]

By this tale all may see, that he is not wise who will put his confidence in boasters and great swearers, who oftimes will do but little when it comes to the point.

TALE LXXV.—OF THE SHOEMAKER WHO ASKED THE COLLIER, "WHAT TIDINGS IN HELL?"

A shoemaker, sitting in his shop, saw a collier pass by, and derided him because he was so black, and asked him, what news from hell, and how the devil fared? to whom the collier answered, "he was well when I saw him last, for he was riding, and waited for a shoemaker to put on his boots."

By this tale ye may see, that he who derides others, is sometimes himself much more derided and mocked.

TALE LXXVI.—OF SAINT PETER WHO CRIED, "CAUSE BOBE."

I find, written among old jests, how God made St. Peter porter of heaven; and that God of his goodness, soon after his passion, suffered many to come to the kingdom of

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heaven, who little deserved it; and, at that time, there was in heaven a great company of Welshmen, who with their cracking and babling troubled all the others: and God said to St. Peter, that he was weary of them, and would fain have them out of heaven: and St. Peter said, "good Lord, I warrant it shall be shortly done;" and so he went out of heaven's gates, and cried with a loud voice, "cause bobe," that is say, "roasted cheese," which the Welshmen hearing, ran out of heaven a great pace: and when St. Peter saw them all out, he went in suddenly and locked the door, and so shut all the Welshmen out.

By this tale ye may see, that it is not wisdom for a man to set his mind too much on any delicate or worldly pleasure, whereby he may lose celestial and eternal joy.

TALE LXXVII.—OF HIM WHO ADVENTURED BODY AND SOUL FOR HIS PRINCE.

There were two knights, who went to a standing field with their prince; and one of them was confessed before he went, but the other went without shrift or repentance. This prince took the field, and gained the victory that day; therefore, he who was confessed,

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came to the prince and asked an office, and said that he deserved it, for he had done good service, and ventured that day as far as any man in the field: but the other who was unconfessed said, "nay, by the mass, I am more worthy to have a reward than he, for he ventured but his body for your sake, for he durst not go to the field till he was confessed—

[*The remainder of the tale is missing.*]

TALE LXXVIII.—OF THE PARSON WHO STOLE THE MILLER'S EGGS.

Too imperfect to decipher.

TALE LXXIX.—OF THE WELSHMAN WHO SAW ONE FORTY SHILLINGS BETTER THAN GOD.

A Welshman, on a time, went to church to be shrived, and chanced to come in the sacring time; when he had confessed, he went home, and one of his fellows asked him, "if he had seen God Almighty to-day?" and he answered, "nay, but I saw one forty shillings better."

TALE LXXX.—OF THE FRIAR WHO SAID DIRGE FOR THE HOG'S SOUL.

Upon a certain time, some women in the country appointed to deride and mock a wan-

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dering friar, who used much to trouble them. So one of them, a little before the friar came, took a hog, and laid it under the board, as though it were a corpse, and told the friar it was her good man, and desired him to say dirge for his soul. The friar, and his fellow, began placebo and dirige, and so on through the service, very devoutly; which, the wives hearing, could not refrain from laughing, and they went into a little parlour to laugh more at their pleasure. These friars, somewhat suspected the cause, and, before the women were aware, looked under the board, and seeing it was a hog, suddenly took it between them, and carried it home as fast as they could. But the women, seeing that, ran after them, and cried "come back, master friar, come again, and let it alone." "Nay, by my faith," said the friar, "he is a brother of ours, and must be buried in our cloisters;" and so the friars got the hog.

By this ye may see, that, when people make a practice to mock and deride others, it sometimes turns to their own loss and damage.

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TALE LXXXI.—OF THE PARSON WHO SAID THE MASS OF REQUIEM FOR CHRIST'S SOUL.

There was a certain priest, dwelling in the country, who was not very well learned; therefore, on Easter Even, he sent his boy two miles to the next town to ask the priest what mass he should sing on the morrow. This boy came to the priest and discharged his master's errand. "Then," said the priest, "tell thy master he must * *

[*A few lines wanting.*]

"mass he should sing on the morrow." "By my troth," said the boy, "I have forgotten it, but he bade me tell you it began * * * * "Then," said the priest, "I know thou sayest truly, for now I remember me, it is the mass of requiem, for God Almighty died on Good Friday, and it is right we should say mass for his soul."

By this tale ye may see, that when one fool sendeth another fool on his errand, his business is but foolishly done.

TALE LXXXII.—OF THE HERDSMAN WHO SAID, "RIDE APACE, WE SHALL HAVE RAIN."

A certain scholar of Oxford, who had studied the judicials of astronomy, was one day riding,

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and there came by a herdsman, and he asked this herdsman how far it was to the next town? "Sir," said the man, "it is rather more than a mile and a half; but ye had need ride apace, or ye will have a shower of rain before ye get there." "What," said the scholar, "makes ye say so? there is no token of rain, for the clouds are fair and clear." "Yes," said the herdsman, "but ye will find it so." The scholar then rode on; but, before he had got half a mile, there fell such a shower of rain, that he was well washed, and wet to the skin. The scholar then turned back, and rode to the herdsman, and desired him to show him that craft. "Nay," said the herdsman, "I will not teach you my craft for nought." Then the scholar proffered him forty shillings to teach him that craft; and when the herdsman had received the money, he said, "sir, see you not yonder the black ewe with the white face?" "Yes," said the scholar, "Well," said the herdsman, "when she danceth and holds up her tail, ye shall have a shower of rain within half an hour after."

By this ye may see, that the skill of herdsmen and shepherds, as regards the alteration of weather, is more sure than the judicials of astronomy."

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TALE LXXXIII.—OF THE MAN WHO SAID, "I SHALL NOT HAVE A PENNY."

In a certain town dwelt a rich man, who lay on his bed at point of death, and charged his executors to dole for his soul a certain sum of money in pence; and, on this condition, charged them, as they would answer to God, that every poor man who came to them, and told a true tale, should have a penny, and those who said falsely should have none; and in the dole time came one and said, "that God was a good man;" said the executors, "thou shalt have a penny, for thou sayest truly." Anon came another, and said, "the devil was a good man;" said the executors, "thou liest, and shalt not have a penny." At last came one who said, "thou shalt not give me a penny;" which words amazed the executors, and made them consider whether they should

[*A few lines wanting.*]

TALE LXXXIV.—OF THE HUSBAND WHO SAID HIS WIFE AND HE AGREED WELL.

This tale is too imperfect to decypher.

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TALE LXXXV.—OF THE PRIEST THAT SAID, "COMEDE EPISCOPE."

In the time of visitation, a bishop which * * * * * * and had got many children, prepared to question a priest as to what rule he kept; which priest had a *leman*, and by her had two or three small children. A short time before the bishop's coming, the priest prepared a room, to hide his leman and children, over, in the roof of his hall; and when the bishop was come, and talking with him in the hall, having ten of his own children about him, the priest, who could speak little or no Latin, bade the bishop in Latin * * * comede espiscope. The woman in the roof of the house, hearing the priest say so, thought he had called her, bidding her come; and said, "shall I bring my children with me also!" The bishop, hearing this, said in sport, "uxor tuor sicut vitis abundans in lateribus domus tuæ." The priest, half amazed, answered, and said, "Filii tui sicut novellæ olivarum in circuitu mensæ tuæ."

By this ye may see that they who have but small learning may speak truly unadvisedly.

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TALE LXXXVI.—OF THE WOMAN WHO STOLE THE POT.

On the morning of Ash Wednesday, a curate of the church, who had set up late, and made good cheer the night before, came to the church to hear confession; to whom there came a woman, who, among other things, confessed she had stolen a pot; but, because of the great watch this priest had kept, he suddenly fell asleep; and, when the woman saw he was not willing to hear her, she rose and went her way. And, anon, another woman kneeled to the same priest, and began to say "Benedicite;" wherewith the priest awaking, and thinking it had been the same woman still, said angrily, "what! art thou at Benedicite again? tell me, what didst thou when thou hadst stolen the pot?"

TALE LXXXVII.—OF MASTER WHITTINGTON'S DREAM.

Soon after one Master Whittington had built a college, on a night, as he slept, he dreamed that as he sat at church (many folks being there also), he saw our Lady in the church, with a glass of goodly ointment in her hand, go to one and ask him what he had done for her sake? who answered, he had said our Lady's psalter every day; therefore she gave

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him a little of the oil. And she went on to another * * *

[*A few lines wanting.*]

he had built a great college, and was very glad in his mind. When our Lady came to him, she asked him what he had suffered for her sake? but this question greatly abashed him, and he had nothing to answer. Wherefore our Lady informed him, that, notwithstanding the great deed of building a college, he must have no part of that goodly ointment.

By this ye may see, that to suffer for his sake is more acceptable to God than to build or give great gifts.

TALE LXXXVIII.—OF THE PRIEST WHO KILLED HIS HORSE, CALLED MODICUS.

A certain bishop appointed to go on visitation to a priest; and, because he would have but little preparation for him, he told the priest to prepare but little meat, saying thus, "preparas * * * modicus." This priest, who did not half understand him, * * * and thinking to obtain the bishop's favour, against his coming, killed his horse, which was called Modicus, of which the bishop and his servants ate part;

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but, when he knew it afterwards, he was greatly displeased.

By this ye may see, that many a fool doth spend much in making good cheer for dinners, and has but little thanks for his labour.

TALE LXXXIX.—OF THE WELSHMAN WHO STOLE THE ENGLISHMAN'S COCK.

A Welshman, dwelling in England, happened to steal an Englishman's cock, and set it on the fire to seethe. This Englishman, suspecting the Welshman, came to his house and saw the cock seething on the fire, and said to him, "sir, this is my cock." "Marry," said the Welshman, "if it is thine, thou shalt have thy part of it." "Nay," said the other, "that is not enough." "By cotte's plud and her nail," said the Welshman, "if her be not enough now her will be enough soon, for her hath a good fire under her."

TALE XC.—OF HIM WHO BROUGHT A BOTTLE TO A PRIEST.

Certain vicars of Poole, disposed to be merry, met on a Sunday at high mass time, and sent a mad fellow, of their acquaintance, unto a

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foolish drunken priest to give him a bottle. Which man met the priest on the top of the stairs by the chancel doors, and said to him, "sir, my master sends you a bottle to put your drink in, because he can keep none in your brains." With this the priest, being very angry, kicked the bottle into the body of the church upon the gentleman's head.

TALE XCI.—OF THE INDICTMENT OF JESUS OF NAZARETH.

A certain Jury, in the county of Middlesex, was empannelled for the king to inquire of all indictments, murders, and felonies. The persons of this panel were foolish, covetous, and unlearned; for, whoever would give them a groat, they would affirm and verify his bill, whether it was true or false, without any proof or evidence; wherefore one that was * * * *

[*A few lines wanting,*]

looking on the groat, and not on the bill, as was their custom; which bill, when it was presented in the court, the judge said openly before all the people, "Lo! sirs, here is the strangest bill ever presented by an inquest, for here they have indicted Jesus of Nazareth

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for stealing an ass;" which, when the people heard, it made them all laugh, and wonder at the foolishness and shameful perjury of the jury.

By this tale ye may see, that it is great peril to empannel men upon an inquest which are foolish, or have but small wit or honesty.

TALE XCII.—OF THE FRIAR WHO PREACHED AGAINST THOSE WHO RODE ON A SUNDAY.

In a certain parish, a friar preached and said much against those who rode on a Sunday; ever looking intently upon one who was there, spurred and ready to ride. This man, perceiving that the friar looked at him, suddenly, half in anger, answered him thus, "I marvel that ye say so much against those who ride on a Sunday, for Christ rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, as thou knowest it is written." * * * But the friar suddenly answered him thus, "know ye not also what came thereby? was he not hanged on the Friday after?" Hearing which, all who were in the church fell to laughing.

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XCIII.—OF THE ONE BROTHER WHO FOUND A PURSE.

There was a certain man had two sons unlike each other; for the eldest was lusty and quick, and used much to rise betimes to walk into the fields; but the younger was slow, and used much to lie in his bed as long as he might. So one day the elder, as he used, rose early and walked into the fields, and there, by fortune, he found a purse of money, and brought it home to his father. His father, when he received it, went straight to his other son, who was yet lying in bed, and said to him, "O, thou sluggard, seest thou not thine eldest brother, how he, by his early rising, hast found a purse with money, whereby we shall be greatly holpen all our life; whilst thou, sluggishly in thy bed, dost no good but sleep." He then knew not what to say, but answered shortly, and said, "father, if he who lost the purse and money had lain in his bed that same time that he lost it, as I do now, my brother had found no purse nor money to-day.

By this ye may see, that those who are accustomed to vice and sin, will always find one excuse or other to cloak therewith their vice and unthriftfulness.

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TALE XCIV.—OF THE ANSWER OF THE MISTRESS TO THE MAID.

A certain wife there was who was somewhat fair; and, as all women are who be fair, she was somewhat proud of her beauty; and, as she and her maid sat together, she, as one that was desirous to be praised, said to to her thus, "I'faith, Joan, how thinkest thou, am I not a fair wife?" "Yes, by my troth, mistress," said she, "ye be the fairest that ever was except" * * * *

[*A few lines wanted.*]

TALE XCV.—OF THE NORTHERN MAN WHO WAS ALL HEART.

Of this tale but a fragment remains.

TALE XCVI.—OF THE BURNING OF OLD JOHN.

In a certain town, there was a wife somewhat aged that had buried her husband, whose name was John; and whom she so tenderly loved in his life, that after his death she caused an image of wood to be made, in form and person, as like him as could be; which image she kept under her bed by day, and every

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night she caused her maid to wrap it in a sheet and lay it in her bed, and she called it old John. This widow had an apprentice, whose name was John, who fain would have married his mistress, not for the pleasure he expected, but only for her good substance, for she was rich. Wherefore he imagined how he could obtain his desire; and, at last, did speak to the maid of the house, and induced her to lay him in his mistress's bed for one night, instead of the image, and promised her a good reward for her labour. This maid, then, over night, wrapped the said young man in a sheet, and laid him in his master's bed, as she was wont to lay the image. The widow was wont, every night before she slept, and at various times when she waked, to kiss the said image of old John; wherefore, on this night, she kissed the said young man, believing that she had kissed the image; when he suddenly took her in his arms, and so pleased her then, that old John from thenceforth was clean out of her mind; and she was content that this young John should lie with her still all that night, and that the image of old John should lie still under the bed, as a thing of nought. After this, in the morning, this widow, intending to please this young John, who had made her so good

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pastime all the night, bad her maid go dress them some good meat for their breakfast, to feast therewith her young John. The maid, when she had long sought for wood to dress the meat, told her mistress, that she could find no wood that was dry enough, except the image of old John, that lay under the bed. * * * *

[*A few lines wanting.*]

and dressed the breakfast; and so old John was burned, and from thenceforth young John occupied his place.

TALE XCVII.—OF THE COURTIER WHO ATE HOT CUSTARD.

A certain merchant and a courtier, on a time, being together to dinner, and having a hot custard, the courtier, being somewhat homely of manner, took part of it, and put it in his mouth; but it was so hot, that it made him shed tears. The merchant, looking at him, thought he had been weeping, and asked him why he wept? and the courtier, not willing to own that he had burnt his mouth with the hot custard, answered thus, "sir, I had a brother who did a certain offence, for which he was hanged, and chancing now to think

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upon his death, it maketh me weep." This merchant thought the courtier spoke truly; and anon, feeling disposed to eat of the custard, put a spoonful of it in his mouth, and burnt his mouth also, that his eyes watered. This courtier, perceiving that, said to him, "sir, why do ye weep now?" The merchant, seeing how he had been deceived, answered and said, "marry," quoth he, "I weep because thou wast not hanged when thy brother was hanged."

TALE XCVIII.

This tale is not recovered.

TALE XCIX.—OF THE THREE POINTS BELONGING TO A SHREWD WIFE.

A young man, who was desirous to have a wife, came to a company of philosophers who were gathered together, requiring them to give him their opinion how he might choose a wife who was not a shrew. These philosophers, with great study and deliberation, determined, and showed this man that there were three especial points whereby he should know if a woman was a shrew:—The first point is, that

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if a woman have a shrill voice, it is a great token that she is a shrew; the second point is, that if a woman have a sharp nose, she is most probably a shrew; the third point is, that never doth miss, that if she wear a kerchief, ye may be sure she is a shrew

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TALE C.—OF THE MAN WHO PAINTED THE LAMB UPON HIS WIFE'S BELLY.

A cunning painter there was who had a fair young wife, and for things that he had to do went over sea; but because he was rather jealous, he prayed his wife to let him paint a lamb upon her belly, and that she would let it remain there until he came home again; this she agreed to, and after it was so painted he departed. Soon after he was gone, a lusty young merchant, a bachelor, came and wooed his wife, and obtained her favour, so that she was content that he should lie with her: this merchant afterwards visited her, and oftimes had his pleasure; and on a time he took his pencil and painted on the lamb two horns, making the wife believe that he had refreshed the old painting: at last, about a year after, the husband came home again; and the first night he laid with his wife, he looked upon

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her belly and saw the two horns painted there; and he said to his wife, that some other body had been busy there, and made a new painting, for the picture that he painted had no horns, and this had horns: to him this wife shortly
* * *

[*The remainder of the tale is lost.*]

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PART II.

TALES & QUICK ANSWERS.

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PART II.

TALES AND QUICK ANSWERS.

TALE I.—OF HIM THAT RODE OUT OF LONDON AND HAD HIS SERVANT FOLLOWING ON FOOT.

There was a man on a time that rode five miles out of London, and had his servant following after him on foot, the which came so near that the horse struck him a great stroke upon the thigh. The servant, thinking to be revenged, took and threw a great stone at the horse, and hit his master on the reins of the back, who thought it had been his horse. He, within a while, looked back, and chid his servant because he came halting so far behind; the servant answered, "sir, your horse hath given me such a stroke upon my thigh, that I can go no faster." "Truly," said his master, "the horse is a great kicker; for likewise,

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with his heel right now, he gave me a great stroke upon the reins of my back."

TALE II.—OF HIM THAT PREACHED ON ST. CHRISTOPHER'S DAY.

A friar that preached upon a St. Christopher's day, greatly lauding St. Christopher, said, "what a prerogative had he here on earth, in his arms to bear our Saviour! was there ever any like him in grace?" A homely blunt fellow, hearing him ask that question twice or thrice so earnestly, answered, "yes, marry, the ass that bare both him and his mother."

TALE III.—OF THE FRENCHMAN THAT STROVE WITH THE GENOESE FOR HIS ARMS.

There was one among the Genoese that the French king had hired to make war against the Englishmen, which bore an ox's head painted on his shield; the which shield a nobleman of France challenged, and so long they strove, that they must needs fight for it. So, at a day and place appointed, the French gallant came into the field, richly armed at all points. The Genoese, all unarmed, came also into the field, and said to the Frenchman,

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"wherefore shall we this day fight?" "Marry," said the Frenchman, "I will make good with my body that these arms were my ancestor's before they were thine." "What were your ancestor's arms?" quoth the Genoese; "an ox's head," said the Frenchman; "then," said the Genoese, "here needeth no battle, for this that I bear is a cow's head."

By this tale ye perceive how nicely the vain bragging was derided.

TALE IV.—OF THE CURATE THAT SAID OUR LORD FED FIVE HUNDRED PERSONS.

A certain curate, preaching on a time to his parishioners, said, that our Lord, with five loaves, fed five hundred persons. The clerk, hearing him fail, said softly in his ear, "sir, ye err, the Gospel is five thousand." "Hold thy peace, fool," said the curate, "they will scarcely believe that they were five hundred."

TALE V.—OF HIM WHO OFFERED HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE.

There was a man upon a time that offered his daughter to a young man in marriage, the which young man refused her, saying, that she was too young to be married. "Verily,"

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said the foolish father, "she is more able than you guess, for she hath borne three children by our parish clerk."

So by this tale ye may see, that fools cannot tell what and when to speak, therefore it were best for them to keep always silent.

TALE VI.—OF THEM THAT CAME TO LONDON TO BUY A CRUCIFIX.

There were certain men, upon a time, sent out of a village to London to buy a crucifix of wood. The carver that they came to, seeing and hearing by their words, that they were but foolish blind fellows, asked them if they would have the image alive or dead? which question so abashed them, that they went aside to devise which was best; so, when they had spoken privily together, they came to the carver again, and said, "that they would have the image alive; for, if their neighbours at home were not so content, they might lightly kill him,

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TALE VII.—OF HIM THAT FOLLOWED HIS WIFE TO BURYING.

A man that weeping followed his wife to burial, rebuked his little son that went with

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him, because he sung, saying that he was peevish, and mad to sing at his mother's burying, but he should rather be sorry and weep. The child answered, "father, seeing ye give to these priests money to sing at my mother's burying, why be ye angry with me that ask you nothing for my singing?" His father answered, "the priest's office and thine is not all one."

By this tale ye may perceive, that all things beseem not every body.

TALE VIII.—OF HIM THAT FELL INTO THE FIRE.

A fellow that was froward to his wife, used to be out drinking many times very late. So on a night he tarried so long out that his wife went to bed, and bid her maid make a good fire, and tarry up for him. About twelve o'clock home he came; and as he stood warming him by the fire, his head was so dizzy that he fell into the fire; the maid, seeing him fall, ran up crying to her mistress, and said, "alas! my master is fallen, and lieth along straight in the fire." "No force, maid," said her mistress, "let him lie, and take his pleasure in his own house wheresoever he listeth.

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TALE IX.—OF HIM THAT USED TO CALL HIS SERVANT THE KING OF FOOLS.

There was a man that had a dull lumpish fellow to his servant, wherefore he used commonly to call him the king of fools. The fellow at last waxed angry in his mind, to be always so called, and said to his master, "I would that I were the king of fools, for then no man could compare with me in largeness of kingdom, and also you should be my subject."

By this one may perceive, that too much of one thing is not good; many a one calleth another fool, and is more fool himself.

TALE X.—OF THE YOUNG WOMAN, WHO SORROWED SO GREATLY HER HUSBAND'S DEATH.

There was a young woman, the which, for her husband lay dying, sorrowed out of all measure; wherefore her father came often to her, and said, "daughter, leave your mourning, for I have provided for you another husband, a far more goodly man." But she did not only continue in her sorrow, but also was greatly displeased that her father made any motion to her of another husband; and as soon as she had buried her husband, and the soul mass

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was sung, and they were at dinner, between sobbing and weeping, she whispered her father in the ear, and said, "father, where is the same young man that you said should be my husband?"

So thus may ye see, that women sorrow right long after their husband be departed to God.

TALE XI.—OF HIM THAT KISSED THE MAID WITH A LONG NOSE.

A babbling gentleman, the which, on a time, would have kissed a fair maid, the which had not the least nose, said, "how should I kiss you? your nose would not suffer our lips to meet. The maiden, waxing angry in her mind, for with his scoff he a little touched her, answered in this way, "sir, if ye cannot kiss my mouth for my nose, ye may kiss me there where I have not a nose."

Ye may by this tale learn, that it is folly so to scoff, that yourself thereby should be laughed to scorn again; one that is over covetous ought not to scoff at another for prodigality. Thou art her brother, said Alcmeon to Adrastus, that slew her husband; but he blamed not Alcmeon for another's fault, but objected

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against him his own; "thou hast, with thy hand," said he, "slain thine own mother." It is not enough to have rebukes ready, and to speak vile words against another, but he that does so ought to be without any vice; for, of all men, said Plutarch, he ought to be innocent, and have his life unculpable that would reprehend the faults of others. The little moral book saith—

"It is a foul thing, worthy of rebuke and blame,
A vice to reprehend, and do the same."

TALE XII.—THE OUTLANDISHMAN'S ANSWER, CONCERNING THE STEEPLE AND PULPIT.

In a certain place, on a time, the parishioners had pulled down their steeple, and had built it up new again, and had put out their bells to be new founded; and because they rang not at the bishop's entering into the village, as they were wont and accustomed to do, he asked a good homely man whether they had no bells in their steeple? he answered "no." "Then," said the bishop, "ye may sell away your steeple." "Why so? and please your lordship," said the man. "Because it standeth vacant," said the bishop. "Then," said the

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man, "ye may as well sell away another thing that we have in our church." "What is that?" said the bishop. "That is a pulpit," quoth he, "for this seven years there was no sermon made therein."

TALE XIII.—OF THE BEGGAR'S ANSWER TO SKELTON, THE POET.

A poor beggar, that was foul, black, and loathly to behold, came upon a time to Master Skelton, the poet, and asked him alms; to whom Master Skelton said, "I pray thee get away from me, for thou lookest as though thou camest out of hell." The poor man, perceiving he would give him nothing, answered, "forsooth, sir, ye say truth, I came out of hell." "Why didst thou not tarry still there?" quoth Master Skelton. "Marry, sir," quoth the beggar, "there is no room for such poor beggars as I am, all is kept for such gentlemen as you be."

TALE XIV.—OF THE CHAPLAIN WHO SAID OUR LADY'S MATINS IN BED.

A certain lord's chaplain, boasted on a time, sitting at his lord's table, that he said our

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Lady's matins every morning, besides all his other services and orisons. The lord, to prove whether his chaplain did as he said, arose early on a morning, and went to his chaplain's chamber, and called him, saying, where be ye sir William? "Here, and please your lordship," quoth he, "in bed." "Why," said the lord, "I thought ye had been up, and saying our Lady's matins?" "I am now saying it," quoth the scholar. "What? lying in your bed," quoth the lord. "Why, sir," said the chaplain, "where should women be served but in bed?"

TALE XV.—OF HIM THAT LOST HIS PURSE IN LONDON.

A certain man of the country, the which, for business, came up to London, lost his purse as he went late in the evening; and, because the sum therein was great, he set up bills in divers places, that if any man of the city had found the purse, and would bring it again to him, he should have well for his labour. A gentleman of the temple wrote under one of the bills, how the man should come to his chamber, and told where; so when he was come, the gentleman asked him, first, what was in the purse? secondly, what countryman he

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was? and thirdly, what was his name? "Sir," quoth he, "twenty nobles *was* in the purse; I am a half Welshman; and my name is John ap Jenkin." "John ap Jenkin," said the gentleman, "I am glad I know thy name; for so long as I live, thou, nor none of thy name, shall have my purse to keep; and now farewell, gentle John ap Jenkin." Thus he was mocked to scorn, and went his way.

Hereby ye may perceive, that a man cannot have a shrewd turn, but otherwhile a mock withal.

TALE XVI.—OF THE MERCHANT THAT LOST HIS BUDGET BETWEEN WARE AND LONDON.

A certain merchant, between Ware and London, lost his budget, and a hundred pounds therein; wherefore he caused to proclaim, in divers market towns, that whoever found the said budget, and would bring it again, should have twenty pounds for his labour. An honest husbandman, that chanced to find the said budget, brought it to the bailiff of Ware, according to the cry, and required his twenty pounds for his labour, as was proclaimed. The covetous merchant, when he understood this, and that he must needs pay twenty pounds

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for the finding, he said there was a hundred and twenty pounds in his budget, and so would have had his own money, and twenty pounds over. So long they strove, that the matter was brought before Master Vavesor, the good judge; when he understood by the bailiff that the cry was made for a budget with a hundred pounds therein, he demanded where it was; "here," quoth the bailiff, and took it to him. "Is it just a hundred pounds?" said the judge. "Yes, truly," quoth the bailiff." "Hold," said the judge, to him who found the budget, "take thou this money to thine own use, and if thou happen to find a budget with a hundred and twenty pounds therein, bring it to this honest merchant." "It is mine; I lost no more than a hundred pounds," said the merchant. "Ye speak now too late," said the judge.

By this tale ye may understand, that they who go about to deceive others be oftimes deceived themselves; and sometimes one falleth in the ditch that he himself made.

TALE XVII.—OF HIM THAT WAS CALLED CUCKOLD.

A certain man, which, upon a time, between earnest and jest, was called cuckold, went angrily home to his wife, and said, "wife, I

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was this day, in company, called cuckold; whether am I one or not?" "Sir, truly," said she, "ye are none." "By my faith," said he, "thou shall swear so upon this book;" and he held her the book. She refused it for long, but when she saw there was no remedy, she said, "well, since I must needs swear, I promise you, by my faith, I will swear truly." "Yea, do so," quoth he. So she took the book in her hand, and said, "by this book, sir, ye be a cuckold." "By the mass, whore," said he, "thou liest; thou sayest it for no other cause but to anger me."

By this tale ye may perceive, it is not best at all times for a man to believe his wife, though she swear upon a book.

TALE XVIII.—OF THE JEALOUS MAN.

A man that was right jealous of his wife, dreamed on a night, as he lay in bed with her and slept, that the devil appeared to him, and said, "wouldst thou not be glad that I should put thee in surety of thy wife?" "Yes," said he. "Hold!" said the devil, "as long as thou hast this ring upon thy finger no man shall make thee cuckold." The man was glad

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thereof; and, when he waked, he found his finger in * * * * * *

TALE XIX.—OF THE FAT WOMAN THAT SOLD FRUIT.

As a great fat woman sat and sold fruit in Lent, there came a young man by, and beheld her fruit earnestly, and specially he cast his eyes on her figs. She asked him, as was her custom, "sir, will ye have any figs? they be fair and good;" and when she saw he was content, she said, "how many will ye have, five pounds?" He was content; so she weighed him out five pounds into his lap; and while she laid aside her balance, he went his way, fair and softly. When she turned to take the money, and saw her chapman go his way, she made after apace, but faster with her voice than her foot; he, dissembling the matter, went still forth on. She made such a crying, and folks gathered so fast that he stood still; so he showed to the people all the matter, and said, "I bought nothing of her, but that she unbid gave me I took; and if she will, I am content to go before the justice."

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TALE XX.—OF THE CHEAT THAT BEGUILED A PRIEST.

Upon a time, in Antwerp, a false cheating fellow came unto a certain priest, who had his purse hanging at his girdle, stretching out full of money, that he a little before had received, and gently greeting him, said, "good master, our parish priest bid me buy him a pall," (which is the uppermost vestment a priest sings mass in,) "if it would please you to go with me, I were much bound to you, for our curate and you are of one stature?" The priest was content. When they came there, where he would buy it, the pall was brought forth, and the priest did it on. The cheat looked and gazed thereon, and praised it, but blamed it as being too short before. "Nay," quoth the seller, "the fault is not in the vestment, it is the purse sticking out underneath that beareth it up." Shortly to speak, the priest took off his purse and laid it by, and then the vestment they beheld again; when the cheat saw the priest turn, he snatched up the purse, and took to his legs and ran away. The priest ran after him with the vestment on his back, and the vestment-maker after the priest; the priest bad, stop the thief; the seller bad, stop the priest; the cheat bad, hold the mad priest; and every man thought he had been mad

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indeed, because he had the vestment on his back; and so, while one hindered the other, the false cheat went his way.

TALE XXI.—OF PAPIRIUS PRETEXTATUS.

Aulus Gellius rehearseth how the senators of Rome, on a time, held a great council, before which time the senator's children, called on account of their garments, "pueri pretextati," used to come into the parliament house with their fathers. So at this time, a child, called Papirius, came in with his father, and heard the great council, which was strictly commanded to be kept secret till it should be decreed. When this child came home, his mother asked him what the council was? The child answered, "it ought not to be told." Now was his mother more desirous to know it than she was before, wherefore she inquired more straitly and more violently. The child, being sore constrained of his mother, shortly devised a proper lie. "It is reasoned in the parliament," quoth he, "which should be most profitable to the commonwealth, a man to have two wives, or a woman two husbands?" When she heard him say so, her mind was pacified, and forthwith she went and told it to the other

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matrons. On the morrow, a great company of the most notable wives of Rome came to the parliament house weeping, and humbly praying, that rather one woman should be married to two men, than two women to one man; the senators, entering into the court, what with the sudden assembling of the wives, and their request, were right sore astonished. Then the child, Papirius, stood forth, and informed the senators how his mother would have compelled him to utter the secret counsel, and how he, to content her, feigned that lie; for which deed the senators highly commended the child's fidelity and wit; and forthwith, they made a law, that no child after that (save only Papirius) should come into the parliament house with his father; and for his great prudence, at that tender age, he had given to him, to his great honour, this surname, "Pretextatus."

Whereby ye may see, that the high treasure of man, and greatest grace, resteth in well ordering the tongue. The most prudent poet, Hesiod, says, "the tongue should not run at large, but be hid as a precious treasure; for of all the members of man, the tongue, ill ordered, is the worst. The tongue blasphemeth God; the tongue slandereth thy neighbour; the

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tongue breaketh peace, and stirreth up cruel wars; of all things to mankind it is the most mischievous; the tongue is a broker of bawdry; the tongue setteth friends at debate; the tongue, with flattering detraction and wanton tales, infecteth pure and clean minds; the tongue, without sword or venom, strangleth thy brother and friend; and, briefly to speak, the tongue teacheth cursed heresies, and of good Christians, maketh Anti-Christs.

XXII.—OF THE CORRUPT MAN OF LAW.

There was a man of law which, on a time, should be judge between a poor man and a rich. The poor man came and gave him a bottle of oil, (which was as much as his power would stretch to,) and desired that he would be good in his matter. "Yes," quoth he, "the matter shall pass well with thee." The rich man, perceiving that, sent to the same judge a fat hog, and prayed him to be favourable on his side; wherefore he gave judgment against the poor man. When the poor man saw he was condemned, piteously complaining, he said to the judge, "sir, I gave you a bottle of oil, and you promised, by your faith, the matter should pass with me." To whom the judge

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said, "for a truth there came a hog into my house, which found the bottle of oil, and overthrew and brake it; and so, through spilling the oil, I quite forgot thee."

"Whereby ye may see, that evermore among,
The rich hath his will, the poor taketh wrong."

TALE XXIII.—OF KING LOUIS OF FRANCE AND THE HUSBANDMAN.

What time King Louis of France, the eleventh of that name, because of the trouble that was in the realm, kept himself in Burgundy, he chanced, by occasion of hunting, to become acquainted with one Conon, a homely husbandman, and a plain meaning fellow, in which kind of men the high princes greatly delight. To this man's house the king oft resorted from hunting, and with great pleasure he would eat radish roots with him. Within a while after, when Louis was restored home, and had the governance of France in his hands, this husbandman was counselled by his wife to take a goodly sort of radish roots, and to go give them to the king, and put him in mind of the good cheer he had made at his house. Conon would not assent thereto;

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"foolish woman," quoth he, "great princes remember not such small pleasure;" but for all that, she would not rest until Conon chose out a great many of the fairest roots, and took his journey towards the court; but, as he went by the way, he ate up all the radishes, save one of the greatest. Conon got into the court, and stood where the king should pass through. Bye and bye the king knew him, and called him to him. Conon stept to the king, and presented his root with a glad cheer; and the king took it more gladly, and bad one who was nearest to him to lay it up among those jewels he loved best, and then commanded Conon to dine with him; and when dinner was done, he thanked Conon; and when the king saw he would depart home, he commanded to give him a thousand crowns of gold for his radish root.

When this was known in the king's house, one of the court gave the king a beautiful horse. The king, perceiving that he did it because of the liberality shown to Conon, with very glad cheer took the gift, and counselled with his lords how, and with what gift, he might recompense the horse that was so goodly and fair. Meanwhile the pickthank had a marvellous great hope, and thought in his

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mind thus, "if he so well recompensed the radish root, given by a rustical man, how much more largely will he recompense such a horse, that is given of me, that am of the court." When every man had said his mind, as though the king had counselled about a great weighty matter, and that they had long fed the pickthank with vain hope, at last the king said, "I remember now what we shall give him;" and so he called one of his lords, and bad him in his ear, go fetch him that he found in his chamber, (and told him the place where,) neatly folded up in silk. Anon he came, and brought the radish root, and even as it was folded up, the king, with his own hand, gave it to the courtier, saying, "we suppose your horse is well recompensed with this jewel, for it has cost us a thousand crowns." The courtier went his way very glad; and when he had unfolded it, he found no other treasure than the radish root almost withered.

TALE XXIV.—OF ANOTHER PICKTHANK AND THE SAME KING.

Upon a time, a servant of the same king, seeing a louse creeping on the king's robes, kneeled down, and put up his hand, as though

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he would do somewhat; and, as the king bowed himself a little, the man took the louse and conveyed it away privily. The king asked him what it was, but he was ashamed to tell; so much the king insisted, that at last he confessed that it was a louse. "O," quoth the king, "it is good luck, for it declareth me to be a man; for that kind of vermin principally grieveth mankind, especially in youth;" and the king commanded to give him fifty crowns for his labour. Not long after, another, seeing that the king gave such a good reward for so small a service, came and kneeled down, and put up his hand, as though he conveyed away something privately; and when the king constrained him to tell him what it was, with much dissembling shamefacedness, he said it was a flea. The king, perceiving his dissimulation, said to him, "what! wouldst thou make me a dog?" and so, for the fifty crowns that he sought for, the king commanded to give him fifty stripes.

Whereby ye may note, that there is great difference between one who doeth a thing with good will, and him that doeth a thing by craft and dissimulation; which thing this noble and most prudent prince well understood; and one ought to be well aware how he hath

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to do with high princes and their business; and if Ecclesiastes forbid that one should think ill to a king, how should any dare to speak ill.

TALE XXV.—OF THALES, THE ASTRONOMER, WHO FELL IN A DITCH.

Laertius writeth, that Thales Milesius went out of his house upon a time, to behold the stars for a certain cause, and so long he went backwards, that he fell into a ditch over his ears; wherefore an old woman, that he kept in his house, laughed, and said to him in derision, "O, Thales, how shouldst thou have knowledge in heavenly things above, and knowest not what is here beneath thy feet."

TALE XXVI.—OF THE ASTRONOMER THAT THIEVES ROBBED.

As an astronomer sat upon a time in the market place of a certain town, and took upon him to divine, and show what their fortunes and chances should be that came to him; there came a fellow and told him (as it was indeed) that thieves had broken into his house, and borne away all that he had. These tidings

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grieved him so much, that all heavy and sorrowfully he rose up and went his way; when the fellow saw him do so, he said, "O, thou foolish and mad man, goest thou about to divine other men's matters, and art ignorant in thine own?"

This tale (beside the blind error of such fools) teacheth those who manage their own matters badly, and will intermeddle in other men's; and Cicero says, "that the wise man who cannot profit himself, hath but little wisdom."

TALE XXVII.—OF THE PLOUGHMAN WHO SAID HIS PATER NOSTER.

A rude outlandish ploughman, which, on a time reproving a holy father, said, that he could say all his prayers with a whole mind and steadfast intention, without thinking on any other thing. To whom the holy man said, "go to, say one pater noster to the end, and think on no other thing, and I will give thee my horse." "That shall I do," quoth the ploughman; and so began to say, "pater noster que es in cælis," till he came to sanctificatur nomen tuum; and then his thought moved him to ask this question, "yea, but

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shall I have the saddle and bridle also?" and so he lost his bargain.

TALE XXVIII.—OF HIM THAT DREAMED HE FOUND GOLD.

There was a man that said in company, upon a time, how he dreamed upon a night that the devil led him into a field to dig for gold; when he had found the gold, the devil said, "thou canst not take it away now, but mark the place, that thou mayest fetch it another time?" "What mark shall I make?" quoth the man. "S * * * over it," said the devil, "for that shall cause every man to shun the place, and for thee it shall be a special knowledge." The man was content, and did so; so when he waked out of his sleep, he perceived he had foully defiled his bed; thus, between stink and dirt, up he rose, and made him ready to go forth; last of all, he put on his bonnet, wherein also, that same night, the cat had s * * *, for great stink thereof, he threw away his cover knave, and was glad to wash his head; thus, his golden dream turned all to dirt.

Tibullus saith, "dreams in the night beguiling, cause fearful minds to dread things

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that never shall be;" but yet Claudian saith, "dreams, in sundry ways figured, giveth warning of unlucky things;" and Valerius Maximus writeth, "that, as Hamilcar beseiged the city of Syracuse, he dreamed that he heard a voice say, that he the next day should sup within the city; wherefore he was joyful, as though the victory from heaven had been to him promised, and so apparelled his host to assault the town; in which assault he chanced to be taken in his lodging by them of the city; and so, bound like a prisoner, they led him into the city; thus he, more deceived by hope than by his dream, supped that night within the city as a prisoner, and not as a conqueror, as he presumed in his mind." Alcebiades, also, had a certain vision in the night of his miserable end.

This tale showeth, that dreams sometimes come to pass by one mean or another; and he that desireth to know more of dreams, written in our English tongue, let him read the tale of "the Nounnes Preste," that G. Chaucer wrote; and for the skill how dreams and swoons are caused, the beginning of "the Book of Fame," the which the said Chaucer compiled, with many another matter full of wisdom.

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TALE XXIX.—OF THE CRACKING YOUNG GENTLEMAN, WHO WOULD OVERTHROW HIS ENEMIES A MILE OFF.

A young gentleman, in a city that was besieged, rebuked the others, and called them cowards, because they would not issue out and fight with their enemies; so he, armed at all points, leaped on horseback and gallopped out at the gates. When he, thus cracking, had gone about a mile, he encountered many returning from the skirmish, sorely wounded, wherefore he began to ride a softer pace; but when he heard the hideous noise, and saw, a mile from him, how fiercely they of the city and their enemies assailed each other, he stood even still. Then one, who heard his cracking before, asked him, why he rode no nearer to fight with their enemies? He answered, "truly, I find not myself so able and strong in arms, that my heart will serve me to ride any nearer to them."

Whereby may be noted, that not only the force of the mind, but the force of the body should be well considered; nor should one brag and boast of doing more than he can well achieve. There be many who, with words, slay their enemies a great way off; but when they see their enemy, they put on a sure breast-plate, and a gorget of a mile's length.

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Plutarch writeth, that when Memnon made war for Darius against Alexander, he heard one of his soldiers crack, and speak many ill words against Alexander; wherefore he rapped him on the pate with a javelin, saying, "I hired thee to fight against Alexander, and not to crack and prate." "Otherwise," says Quintus Curtius, "the covetousness of glory, and insatiable desire of fame causeth that we think nothing over much or over hard." But Sallust says, "before a man undertaketh any feat, he ought first to counsel, and afterwards to go in hand therewith, not heedlessly nor slowly."

TALE XXX.—OF HIM THAT FELL OFF A TREE AND BRAKE HIS RIBS.

There was a husbandman who, on a time, as he climbed a tree to get down the fruit, fell, and brake a rib in his side. To comfort him, there came a very merry man, who, as they talked together, said, he would teach him such a rule, that, if he would follow it, he should never fall from a tree again. "Marry," said the hurt man, "I would ye had taught me that rule before I fell; nevertheless, as it may happen to profit me in time to come, let me hear what it is?" Then the other said, "take

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heed that ye never go down faster than ye went up, but descend as softly as thou climbest up, and thou shalt never fall."

By this tale ye may note, that abiding and slowness sometimes are good and commendable, especially in those things wherein speed and hastiness cause hurt and damage. Seneca says, a "sudden thing is nought."

TALE XXXI.—OF THE FRIAR THAT BRAYED IN HIS SERMON.

A friar that preached to the people, on a time, would the while cry out aloud, (as the manner of some fools is,) which braying did so move a woman that stood hearing his sermon, that she wept. He, perceiving that, thought in his mind that her conscience, being pricked with his words, had caused her to weep; therefore, when his sermon was done, he called the woman to him, and asked what was the cause of her weeping, and whether his words moved her to weep or not? "Forsooth, master," said she, "I am a poor widow; and when my husband died, he left me but one ass, which got part of my living, which ass the wolves have slain; and now, when I heard your high voice, I remembered my silly ass,

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for so he was wont to bray both night and day; and this, good master, caused me to weep." Thus the lewd brayer, rather than preacher, confuted with his foolishness, went his way; which thinking, for braying like an ass, to be reputed the best preacher, deserveth well to hear himself compared to an ass.

"For truly, one to suppose himself wise,
Is unto foolishness the very first gryce."

TALE XXXII.—THE ORATION OF THE AMBASSADOR SENT TO POPE URBAN.

Out of the town of Pavia were sent, upon a time, three ambassadors unto our holy father, Pope Urban, who they found sick in his bed. Before whose holiness one of the said ambassadors had a long and a tedious oration, that he had devised by the way, and which, ere it was ended, right sore annoyed the pope's holiness; when he had said all, the pope asked, "is there anything else?" Another of the three, perceiving how greatly the ambiguous tale grieved the pope's holiness to hear it out, said, "most holy father, this is all the effect, and if your holiness speed us not forthwith, my fellow shall tell his tale again;" at which

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saying the pope laughed, and caused the ambassadors to be sped incontinent.

By this tale one may learn, that superfluous words ought diligently to be avoided, especially where a matter is treated before a high prince.

TALE XXXIII.— OF THE AMBASSADOR SENT TO THE PRINCE AGIS.

Not much unlike the aforesaid tale, Plutarch reciteth, that when the ambassador of the Abderities had at last ended a long tale to the prince Agis, he asked what answer he should make to them that sent him? "Say unto them," quoth the prince, "when thou comest home, that all the long time thou didst spend in telling thy tale, I sat still and heard thee patiently."

TALE XXXIV.—THE ANSWER OF CLEMENCE TO THE SAMIENS AMBASSADOR.

Plutarch rehearseth also, that what time an ambassador, who sent from the Samiens, had made a long oration to Clemence to persuade him to make war against Polycrates; he answered the ambassador on this manner of wise, "I remember not what thou saidst in the beginning of thy tale, and therefore I under-

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stand not the middle, and the conclusion pleaseth me not."

Whereby ye may perceive, that noble wise men love few words; and, as the Rhetoricians say, "among the vices of an orator, there is none more hurtful than the superfluous use of words."

TALE XXXV.—OF THE WISE MAN, PISO, AND HIS SERVANT.

A certain wise man, called Piso, to avoid grievous jangling, commanded that his servants should say nothing, but answer to what was demanded of them, and no more. Upon a day, the said Piso made a dinner, and sent a servant to desire Clodius, the consul, to dine with him. About the hour of dinner, all the guests came, save Clodius, for whom they tarried till it was almost night, and often sent to look if he came. At last Piso said to his servant, "didst thou bid the consul come to dinner?" "Yes, truly," said he. "Why cometh he not then?" quoth Piso. "Marry," quoth the servant, "he said he would not." "Wherefore toldest me not so immediately?" said Piso; "because," quoth the servant, "ye did not ask me."

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By this tale servants may learn to do their master's bidding; but yet I advise masters to take heed how they made an injunction.

TALE XXXVI.—OF THE MERCHANT THAT MADE A WAGER WITH HIS LORD.

A certain merchant, before his lord that he was subject unto, among other things praised his wife, and said that he never heard her let a * * * *; whereat the lord marvelled, and said it was impossible, and so laid and ventured a supper with the merchant, that before three months was ended, he should hear her let a * * * * or two. On the morrow the lord came to the merchant and borrowed fifty crowns, the which he promised faithfully to pay eight days after; the merchant, right sore against his will, lent it, and thoughtfully abode until the day of payment was come, and then he went to his lord and required the money. The lord, making as though he had more need than before, desired the merchant to lend him other fifty crowns, and promised to pay all within a month; and although the good man denied it long, yet, for fear lest he should lose the first sum, with much grudging, lent him the other fifty crowns, and so went home to

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his house right heavy and sorrowful in his mind. Thus, thinking and dreading divers things, he passed many nights away without sleep; and as he lay waking, he heard his wife now and then rap out a * * * *. At the month's end, the lord sent for the merchant, and asked him if he never since heard his wife let a * * * *? The merchant, acknowledging his folly, answered thus, "Forsooth, sir, if I should for every * * * * pay a supper, all my goods and lands would not suffice thereto;" after which the lord paid the merchant his money, and the merchant paid the supper.

Hereby ye may see, that many things pass by them that sleep; and it is an old saying, "he that sleepeth, listeth nobody." By this tale ye may note also, that they, the which fortune sweetly embraceth, sleep soundly; and contrary wise, they that are oppressed with adversity, watch sorrowfully when they should sleep. This man which, for a very foolish thing, praised his wife; afterwards, when a little care began to creep about his stomach, perceived that fault in her right great. The moral book, called "Cato," counselleth us to watch for more part, for much slumber and sleep is the nourishing of vice.

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TALE XXXVII.—OF THE FRIAR THAT GAVE SCROLLS AGAINST PESTILENCE.

Among the beggars in the city of Tiverton was a certain friar, which used to preach about the villages to men of the country; and for as much as they greatly suspected that a plague or pestilence should come among them, he promised each of them a little scroll, which he said was of such a virtue, that he who ever had it hanging about his neck for fifteen days, should not die of the pestilence. The foolish people, trusting hereupon, every one, after his power, gave him money for a scroll; and with a thread, of a maiden's spinning, they hanged it about their necks till the fifteen days' end; but he charged them they should not open it till the fifteen days' end; for if they did, he said, it had no virtue. So when the friar had gathered much money, he went his way. Soon after, (as the desire of folks is to know news,) the said scrolls were read, in which was written, in Italian speech, "*dorma si fili, et cadeti lo fuso, quando ti pieghi, tieni lo culo chiuso;*" which is to say in English, "woman, if thou spin, and thy spindle fall away, when thou stoopest to reach for him, hold thy * * * * close. He said this passed all the precepts and medicines of the physicians.

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By which tale one may learn, that all is not gospel that such wanderers about say, nor every word to be believed; for oftentimes *gelidus jacet anguis in herba.*

TALE XXXVIII.—OF THE PHYSICIAN THAT USED TO WRITE BILLS OVER NIGHT.

A certain physician of Italy used, over night, to write for sundry diseases divers bills, called recipes, and to put them in a bag altogether; in the morning, when the urines (as their custom is) were brought to him, and he desired to show some remedy, he would put his hand into the bag, and at all adventures take out a bill; and, in taking out the bill, he would say to him that came to seek remedy, in their language, "prega dio te la mandi bona;" that is to say, "pray God to send thee a good one."

By this tale ye may see, that miserable is their state which fortune must help, and not reason. Such a physician on a time said to Pausanias, thou ailest nothing. "No," said he, "I have not had to do with thy physic;" and another time a friend of his said, "sir, ye ought not to blame that physician, for his physic did you never hurt." "Thou sayest

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truth," quoth he, "for if I had proved his physic, I should not now have been alive;" again, to another that said, "sir, ye be an able man;" he answered, "yea, thou were not my physician." Such manner checks, are too little for the lewd fools that will practise physic before they knew what belongeth to their name.

TALE XXXIX.—OF HIM THAT WOULD CONFESS HIM BY WRITING.

There was a young man, on a time, who wrote a long libel of his sins; whether he did it for hypocrisy, foolishness, or oblivion, I cannot say, and when he should confess him, he gave it to the confessor to read; which confessor, being well learned and expert in that business, perceived it would take a long time to read over; therefore, after a few words, he said, "I absolve thee from all the sins contained in this libel." "Yea, but what shall my penance be?" quoth the young man. "Nothing else," said the confessor, "but that thou shalt, for the space of a month, read this libel over every day seven times;" and although he said it was impossible for him to do so, yet the confessor would not change his

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sentence; by which subtle answer, he confuted the breble brable of the foolish fellow.

By this tale ye may perceive, that he who occupieth this office, that is to say, a confessor, ought to be discreet, prudent, and well learned. This confessor knew well the ordinance of the holy church, which willeth that confession be made with the mouth, and not by writing.

TALE XL.—OF THE HERMIT OF PADUA.

An hermit of Padua, that was reputed for a holy man, under the semblance of confession, enticed many of the notablest wives of the town into folly and lewdness; so at last, when his offence was divulged and known, (for hypocrisy cannot long be hid,) he was taken by the provost, and brought before the prince of Padua, Duke Francis, the seventh of that name; which, for his disport, sent for his secretary to write the women's names that the hermit had lain by. When the hermit had rehearsed many of the duke's servants' wives, and the secretary, merrily laughing, had written them, he seemed as he had all said, "Be there any more?" said the duke. "No, forsooth," said the hermit. "Tell us truth," quoth the secretary, "who be more, or thou

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shalt be sharply punished." Then the hermit, sighing, said, "go to, write in thine own wife among the number of the other;" which saying so sore grieved the secretary, that the pen fell out of his hand; and the duke laughed right heartily, and said, "it was well done that he, that with so great pleasure heard the faults of other men's wives, should come in the same number."

By this jest we may learn, that one ought not to rejoice at other's grief or hurt, for little knoweth a man what hangs over his own head.

TALE XLI.—OF THE OUTLANDISHMAN WHO SAW THE KING.

An outlandishman, nourished in the woods, came on a time to the city, when all the streets were full of people, and the common voice among them was, "the king cometh!" This rural man, moved with the novelty of that voice, had great desire to see what that multitude flocked to behold; suddenly the king, with many nobles and states before him, came riding royally; then the people all about steadfastly beheld the king, and cried aloud, "God save the king!" "God save the king!"

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This villain, hearing them cry so, said, "O, where is the king? where is the king?" Then one, showing him the king, said, "yonder is he, that rideth upon the goodly white horse." "Is that the king," quoth the villain, "what, thou mockest me? methinks that is a man in a painted garment."

By this tale ye may perceive, as Lycurgus proved by experience, that nourishing, good bringing up, and exercise, is more apt to lead folks to humanity, and the doing of honest things, than nature herself. They for the most part are noble, free, and virtuous, who in their youth have been well nourished, and virtuously endoctrined.

TALE XLII.—OF THE COURTIER THAT BAD THE BOY HOLD HIS HORSE.

A courtier, on a time, who alighted from his horse at an inn gate, said to a boy who stood thereby, "ho! sir, boy, hold my horse." The boy, as though he was afraid, answered, "O, master, this is a fierce horse; is one able to hold him?" "Yes," quoth the courtier, "one may hold him well enough." "Well," quoth the boy, "if one is able enough, I pray you hold him yourself."

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TALE XLIII.—OF THE DECEITFUL SCRIVENER.

A certain scrivener, who had but a bare living by his craft, studied how he might get money; so he came to a young man, and asked him if he was paid ten pounds, which a certain man, who was dead, borrowed, and ought to pay his father in time past? The young man said, there was no such debt owing in his father's name that he knew of. "It is a truth," quoth the scrivener, "for here is the obligation thereof which I made myself." He provoked the young man so much, that he gave him money for the obligation, and before the mayor he required the debt. His son, that was named to be debtor, said plainly, that his father never borrowed money, for if he had it would appear by his books, after a merchant's manner; and forthwith he went to the scrivener, and said to him, "that he was a false man to write a thing that never was done." "Sir," said the scrivener, "thou knowest not what was done at that time, for when thy father borrowed that sum of money, thou wert not born, but he paid it again within three months after; I made the quittance thereof myself, whereby thy father is discharged." So the young man was fain to give him money for the quittance; and, when he

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had shown the quittance, he was discharged of that grievance. Thus, by his fair fraud, he scraped money from them both.

By this tale ye may see, that the children in this our time be very prudent to get money.

TALE XLIV.—OF HIM THAT SAID HE BELIEVED HIS WIFE BETTER THAN OTHER, THAT SHE WAS CHASTE.

A certain man, whose wife (as the voice went) was not very chaste of her body, was warned of his friends to look better to the matter. The man went home, and sharply rebuked his wife, and told her, between them both, what his friends had said. She knowing that perjury was no greater offence than adultery, with weeping and swearing defended her honesty; and bade her husband believe, that they feigned those tales for envy that they had, to see them live so quietly; with these words her husband was content and pleased. So yet, on another time again, his friends warned him of his wife, and bade him rebuke and chastise her; to whom he said, "I pray you trouble me no more with such words; tell me, whether knoweth my wife's faults, you or she?" They said, "she;" "and she," quoth

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he, "who I believe better than you all, sayeth plainly that ye lie."

This was well and wisely done, for one ought not to give light credence to those things wherein resteth perpetual grief of mind.

TALE XLV.—OF HIM THAT PAID HIS DEBT WITH CRYING "BEA."

There was a man, upon a time, who took as much ware of a merchant as drew to fifty pounds, and riotously played and spent the same away, within a short space; so, when the day of payment came, he had neither money nor ware to pay; therefore he was arrested, and must come before the justice. When he saw there was no other remedy, but that he should be constrained either to pay the debt or go to prison, he went to a subtle man of law, and showed to him his matter, and desired of him his counsel and help. "What wilt thou give me," quoth the man of law, "if I rid thee of this debt?" "By my faith," quoth the debtor, "five marks; and, lo! here it is ready, as soon as I am quit ye shall have it." "Good enough," quoth the man of law, "thou must be ruled by my counsel, and thus do; when thou comest before the

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justice, whatever he says unto thee, look that thou answer to nothing, but cry, Bea, still, and let me alone with the rest." "Content," quoth he. So, when they were come before the justice, he said to the debtor, "dost thou owe this merchant this sum of money or no?" "Bea," quoth he; "what!" quoth the justice, "best answer to thy plaint, or else thou wilt be condemned;" "Bea," quoth he again. Then his man of law stood forth, and said, "sir, this man is but an idiot; who would believe that this merchant, who is both wise and subtle, would trust this idiot, who can speak never a ready word, of forty-penny-worth of ware?" and so, with such reasons, he persuaded the justice to cast the merchant in his own action. So, when the sentence was given, the man of law drew the debtor aside, and said, "lo! how sayest thou now, have I not done well for thee? thou art clear quit of the debt that was demanded of thee; therefore give me my money, and God be with thee." "Bea," quoth he, "what? said the lawyer, thou needest not cry Bea any longer, thy matter is despatched, all is at a point, there remaineth nothing but to give me my wages that thou promised." "Bea," quoth he again. "I say," quoth the man of law, "cry Bea no longer, but give me

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my money." "Bea," quoth he. Thus the man of law, neither for fair nor foul, could get any other thing of his client than Bea; therefore, all angrily, he departed, and went his way.

By this tale ye may perceive, that they which be the inventors and devisers of frauds and deceit, are oftimes thereby deceived themselves; and he who hath hid a snare to entrap another, hath himself been taken therein.

TALE XLVI.—OF THE WOMAN WHO APPEALED FROM KING PHILIP TO KING PHILIP.

A woman, guiltless, on a time, was condemned by King Philip of Macedon, when he was not sober; wherefore she said, "I appeal." "Whither?" quoth the king. "To King Philp," quoth she, "but that is when he is more sober, and better advised;" which saying caused the king to look better on the matter, and to do her right.

This writeth Val Maximus; but Plutarch says, "it was a man, and King Philip was half asleep when he gave sentence."

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TALE XLVII.—OF THE OLD WOMAN WHO PRAYED FOR THE WELFARE OF THE TYRANT, DIONYSIUS.

What time Dionysius, the tyrant, reigned, who, for his cruelty and intolerable dealing, was hated of all the city of Syracuse, and every body wished his death, save one old woman, who every morning prayed God to save him in good life and health. When he understood that she did so, he marvelled greatly at her undeserved benevolence; wherefore he sent for her, and asked, why and how he had deserved that she prayed for him? She answered, "I do it not without a cause, for when I was a maid, we had a tyrant reigning over us, whose death I greatly desired; when he was slain, there succeeded another yet more cruel than he, out of whose governance to be also delivered I thought it a great benefit; the third is thyself, who hast began to reign over us more importunately than either of the other two; thus fearing lest, when thou art gone, a worse should succeed and reign over us, I prayed God daily to preserve thee in health."

TALE XLVIII.—OF THE PHYSICIAN, EUMONUS.

A physician, called Eumonus, told a sick man, who lay in great pain, that he could not

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recover, but must needs die of that disease. This sick man, within a while after, not by the physician's help, but by the will of God, recovered, and was whole of that disease: howbeit he was brought very low and weak; and, as he walked forth on a day, he met the same physician, who, doubting whether it was the same sick man or not, said, "art not thou Gaius?" "Yes, truly," quoth he. "Art thou alive or dead?" said the physician. "I am dead," quoth he. "What dost thou here, then?" said the physician. "Because," quoth he, "I have experience of many things; God hath commanded me that I should come and take up all the physicians that I can get to him;" which saying made Eumonus as pale as ashes for fear. Then Gaius said to him, "dread thou not, Eumonus, though I said all physicians, for there is no man that hath wit that will take thee for one."

TALE XLIX.—OF SOCRATES AND HIS SCOLDING WIFE.

Laertius writeth, that the wise man, Socrates, had a cursed scolding wife, called Xantipe; the which, on a day when she had all chid him, poured a piss-pot upon his head; he, taking all patiently, said, "did I not tell you,

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that when I heard Xantipe thunder so fast, that it would rain anon after."

Whereby ye may see, the wiser a man is, the more patience he taketh. The wise poet, Virgil, says, "all fortune by sufferance must be overcome."

TALE L.—OF THE PHYSICIAN THAT BARE HIS PATIENT ON HAND HE HAD EATEN AN ASS.

A physician, who had but small learning, used, when he came to visit his patients, to touch the pulse, and, if it appeared bad, he would lay the blame on the patient, and bear him on hand, that he did eat figs, apples, or some other thing that he forbad; and because the patients otherwise confessed the same, they thought he had been a very clever man. His servant had great marvel how he perceived that, and desired his master to tell him whether he knew it by touching his pulse, or by some higher knowledge? "Then," said his master, "for the good service thou hast done me, I will open to thee this secret point. When I come into the patient's chamber I look all about, and if I spy on the floor shells, parings of cheese, of apples or pears, or any other scraps, then I conjecture the patient

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hath eaten thereof; and so to the end I would be blameless: I lay the fault on their misdieting." Not long after, the same servant took on him to practise physic; which, in like manner, blamed his patients, and said that they kept not the diet he gave them; and he bare them on hand, that they did eat somewhat, whereof he saw the scraps on the floor. On a time he came to a poor man of the country, and promised to make him whole if he would be governed by him; and so gave him to drink, I wot not what, and went his way till the morrow; when he came again, he found the man sicker than ever he was. The rude fool, not knowing the cause, beheld here and there about, and, when he could see no scraps nor parings, he was sore troubled in his mind. So at last he spied a saddle under the bed; then he said, all aloud, "that he had at length perceived how the sick man impaired; he hath so excessively passed diet," quoth he, "that I wonder he is not dead." "How so?" quoth they. "Marry," quoth he, "ye have made him to eat a whole ass; lo! where the saddle lieth yet under the bed;" for he thought the saddle had been left of the ass as bones are of flesh; for which foolishness he was well laughed to scorn and mocked.

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Thus, as a good faithful physician is worthy of great honour, for, truly, on him dependeth the greatest part of man's health; so likewise a foolish and unlearned, that thinketh to cure with words that he ought to do with herbs, is not only worthy to be derided and mocked, but also punished, for nothing is more perilous.

TALE LI.—OF THE INN-HOLDER'S WIFE AND HER TWO LOVERS.

Near unto Florence dwelled an inn-keeper, whose wife was not very careful of her tail. Upon a night, as she was a bed with one of her lovers, there came another to have lain with her; when she heard him come up the ladder she met him, and bade him go thence, for she had no time then to fulfil his pleasure; but, for all her words, he would not go away, but still pressed her to let him in. So long they stood wrangling, that the good man came upon them, and asked them why they brawled so? The woman, not unprovided with a discreet answer, said, "sir, this man would come in per force to slay or mischief another, that has fled to our house for succour, and hitherto I have kept him back." When he that was within heard her say so, he began to pluck

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up his heart and say, he would be revenged on him that was without; and he that was without, made a face as though he would kill him that was within. The foolish man, her husband, inquired the cause of the debate, and took upon him to settle their quarrel, and so the good silly man spake, and made the peace between them both; yea, and further, he gave them a gallon of wine; adding to his wife's adultery the loss of his wine.

TALE LII.—OF HIM THAT HEALED FRANTIC MEN.

There dwelt a man in Italy, which used to heal men that were frantic, in this manner; he had in his house a gutter, or ditch, full of water, wherein he would put them, some to the middle leg, others to the knee, and some deeper, as they were mad. So one that was well amended, and went about the house to do one thing or another for his meat, as he stood, on a time, at the gate looking into the street, he saw a gentleman ride by with a great many hawks and hounds, the which he called to him, and said, "you, gentleman, whither go ye?" "on hunting," quoth the gentleman; "what do you with all those kites and dogs?" quoth he; "they be hawks and hounds," quoth the

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gentleman; "wherefore keep you them?" quoth the other; "for my pleasure," quoth the gentleman; "what costeth it you a year to keep them?" quoth the other; "forty ducats," quoth the gentleman; "and what do they profit you?" quoth he; "four ducats," quoth the gentleman. "Get thee quickly hence," quoth the mad man, "for if my master come and find thee here, he will put thee in the gutter up to the throat."

This tale touches such young gentlemen that spend over much on hawks, hounds, and other trifles.

TALE LIII.—OF HIM THAT SAID HE WAS NOT WORTHY TO OPEN THE GATE TO THE KING.

As a king of England hunted, on a time, in the county of Kent, he happened to come riding to a great gate, whereby stood a husbandman of the country, to whom the king said, "good fellow, put open the gate." The man, perceiving it was the king, said, "no, and please your grace, I am not worthy; but I will go fetch Master Cooper, that dwelleth not past two miles hence, and he shall open to you the gate."

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TALE LIV.—OF MASTER VAVESOR, AND TURPIN, HIS MAN.

Master Vavesor, sometime a judge of England, had a servant with him called Turpin, which had done him service many years; wherefore he came to his master, on a time, and said to him on this wise, "sir, I have done you service long, wherefore, I pray you, give me somewhat to help me in my old age." "Turpin," quoth he, "thou sayest truth, and hereon I have thought many a time; I will tell thee what thou shalt do: now, shortly I must ride up to London, and if thou wilt bear my costs there, I will surely give thee such a thing that shall be worth to thee a hundred pounds." "I am content," quoth Turpin. So all the way, as he rode, Turpin paid his costs, till they came to their last lodging; and there, after supper, he came to his master, and said, "sir, I have borne your costs hitherto as ye bid me; now, I pray you, let me see what thing it is that should be worth an hundred pounds to me?" "Did I promise thee such a thing?" quoth his master. "Yes, forsooth," quoth Turpin. "Show me thy writing," quoth Master Vavesor. "I have none," said Turpin. "Then thou art like to have nothing," said his master; "and learn this of me, whenever thou makest a bargain with a man, look-

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that thou take sure writing, and be well aware how thou makest a writing to any man; this point hath availed me a hundred pounds in my day, and so it may thee." When Turpin saw there was no other remedy, he held himself content. On the morrow Turpin tarried a little behind his master, to reckon with the hostess where they lay; and of her he borrowed so much money on his master's scarlet cloak as drew to all the costs that they spent by the way. Master Vavesor had not ridden past two miles when it began to rain, wherefore he called for his cloak; his other servants said, "Turpin was behind, and had it with him." So they hovered under a tree till Turpin overtook them; when he was come, Master Vavesor, all angrily, said, "thou knave, why comest thou not with my cloak?" "sir, and please you," said Turpin, "I have laid it to gage for your costs all the way." "Why, knave," quoth his master, "didst thou not promise to bear my charges to London?" "Did I?" quoth Turpin. "Yea," quoth his master, "that thou didst." "Let me see; show me your writing thereof?" quoth Turpin; whereto his master, I think, answered but little.

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TALE LV.—OF HIM THAT SOUGHT HIS WIFE AGAINST THE STREAM.

There was a man whose wife, as she came over a bridge, fell into the river and was drowned; wherefore he went and sought for her upward against the stream; whereat his neighbours, who went with him, marvelled, and said, "ye do wrong, ye should seek her downward with the stream." "Nay," quoth he, "I am sure I shall never find her that way, for she was so wayward, and so contrary to everything while she lived, that I know very well, now she is dead, she will go against the stream."

TALE LVI.—OF HIM WHO, AT A SKIRMISH, DEFENDED HIMSELF WITH HIS FEET.

A lusty young gentleman of France, who, on a time, was at a skirmish, and defended himself valiantly with his feet, came into the court, into a chamber among ladies, with a goodly ring on his finger; to whom a fair lady said, "sir, why wear ye that ring on your finger?" "Wherefore ask you, madam?" quoth he. "Because," said she "your feet did you better service than your hands at the last skirmish you were at."

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By this tale young men may learn to bear them well and valiantly for dread of reproach; better it is with worship to die, than with shame to live; albeit, Demosthenes says, "he that fleeth cometh again to battle."

TALE LVII.—OF HIM THAT WOULD GIVE A SONG FOR HIS DINNER.

There came a fellow, on a time, into a tavern, and called for meat; so, when he had well dined, the taverner came to reckon, and to have his money; to whom the fellow said, he had no money; "but I will," quoth he, "content you with songs." "Nay," quoth the taverner, "I need no songs, I must have money." "Why," quoth the fellow, "if I sing a song to your pleasure, will ye not then be content?" "Yes," quoth the taverner. So he began and sang three or four ballads, and asked if he were pleased? "No," said the taverner. Then he opened his purse, and began to sing thus:

"When you have dined, make no delay,
But pay your host, and go your way."

"Doth this song please you?" quoth he. "Yes, marry," said the taverner, "this pleaseth me well." "Then, as covenant was," quoth the

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fellow, "ye be paid for your dinner;" and so he departed, and went his way.

This tale sheweth, that a man may be too hasty in making a bargain and covenanting; and, therefore, a man ought to take good heed what he sayeth, for one word may bind a man to great inconvenience, if the matter be weighty.

TALE LVIII.—OF THE FOOL WHO THOUGHT HIMSELF DEAD.

There was a fellow, dwelling at Florence, called Nigniaca, which was not very wise, nor all a fool, but merry and jocund. A set of young men, for laugh and pastime, appointed together to make him believe he was sick; so when they had agreed how they would do, one of them met him in the morning as he came out of his house, and bid him good morrow; and then asked him if he were not ill at ease? "No," quoth the fool, "I ail nothing, thank God." "By my faith ye have a sickly pale colour," said the other, and went his way; anon after, another of them met him, and asked him, if he had not an ague? "for your face and colour," said he, "showeth that ye be very sick." Then the fool began a little to

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doubt whether he were sick or no, for he half believed that they said truth. When he had gone a little further, a third man met him, and said, "Jesu, man, what do ye out of your bed? ye look as ye would not live an hour to an end." Now, he doubted greatly, and thought verily, in his mind, that he had some sharp ague; wherefore he stood still and would go no further; and, as he stood, the fourth man came, and said, "Jesu, man, what dost thou here, and art so sick? get thee home to thy bed, for I perceive thou canst not live an hour to an end." Then the fool's heart began to faint, and he prayed this last man that came to him to help him home. "Yes," quoth he, "I will do as much for thee as for my own brother." So home he brought him, and laid him in his bed, and then he fared with himself, as though he would give up the ghost; forthwith came the other fellows, and said, he had well done to lay him in his bed. Anon, after that, came one who took on him to be a physician, which, touching the pulse, said, "the malady was so vehement that he could not live an hour." So they, standing about the bed, said one to another, "now he goeth his way, for his speech and sight fail him, by and by he will yield up the ghost; therefore let us close

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his eyes, and lay his hands across, and carry him forth to be buried;" and then they said, lamenting one to another, "O, what a loss have we of this good fellow, our friend." The fool lay still, as one that were dead, yea, and thought in his own mind that he was dead indeed; so they laid him on a bier, and carried him through the city; and, when any body asked them what they carried, they said, "the corpse of Nigniaca to his grave;" and ever as they went, the people drew about them. Among the crowd there was a taverner's boy, which, when he heard it was the corpse of Nigniaca, he said to them, "O, what a vile beastly knave, and what a strong thief is dead; by the mass, he was well worthy to be hanged long ago." When the fool heard those words, he put out his head, and said, "I think, whoreson, if I were alive now, as I am dead, I would prove thee a false liar to thy face." They that carried him began to laugh so heartily, that they set down the bier, and went their way.

By this tale ye may see, what the persuasion of many doeth; certainly he is very wise who is not inclined to folly, if he be steered thereunto by a multitude; yet sapience is found in few persons, and they be likely old sober men.

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TALE LIX.—OF THE OLD MAN AND HIS SON THAT BROUGHT HIS ASS TO THE TOWN TO SELL.

An old man, on a time, and a little boy, his son, drove a little ass before them, which he purposed to sell at the market town they went to; and, because he so did, the folks that wrought by the way side blamed him; wherefore he sat up his son, and went himself on foot; others, that saw that, called him fool, because he let the young boy ride, and himself so aged to go afoot; then he took down the boy, and leaped up and rode himself. When he had ridden a little way, he heard others blame him because he made the little boy run after as a servant, and he, his father, to ride; then he set up the boy behind him, and so rode forth. Anon, he met with others, who asked him if the ass were his own; by which words he conjectured he did not well so to overcharge the little silly ass, that scarcely was able to bear one; thus he, troubled with their divers and manifold opinions, which, neither with his ass vacant, nor he alone, nor his son alone, nor both together riding at once on the ass, could pass forth without detraction and blame; wherefore, at last, he bound the ass's feet together, and put through a staff, and so he and his son began to bear the ass between

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them, on their shoulders, to the town; the novelty of which sight caused every body to laugh, and blame the foolishness of them both. The silly old man was so sore aggravated, that as he sat and rested him on a river's side, he threw his ass into the water; and so, when he had drowned his ass, he turned to go home again. Thus the good man, desiring to please everybody, contenting none at all, lost his ass.

By this tale appeareth plainly, that they who commit themselves to the opinion of the common people, be oppressed with great misery and servage; for how is it possible to please all, when every man hath a diverse opinion, and diversely judgeth; and that was well known to the poet, when he said, "scinditur incertum studia incontraria vulgus;" and as Cicero, Persius, and Flaccus say, "as many men, so many minds; as many heads, so many wits; that which pleaseth one displeaseth another; few allow that which they love not; and what a man alloweth he thinketh good; therefore, the best is, that every man live well, as a good Christian should, and care not for the vain words and jangling of the people;" "for babbling," as Plutarch says, "is a grievous disease, and hard to be remedied; for that, that should heal it (which is words of

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wisdom) cureth them that harkeneth thereto; but prattlers will hear none but themselves.

TALE LX.—OF HIM THAT SOUGHT HIS ASS, AND RODE ON HIS BACK.

There was, in the country of Florence, a husbandman that used to carry corn to the market, upon many little asses. On a time, as he came homeward, because he was somewhat weary, to ease himself, he rode on one, the strongest of them; and as he rode, driving his asses before him, he counted them, and forgot the one he rode on; wherefore he thought still that he lacked one. Thus, sore troubled in his mind, he bad his wife set up his asses, and hastily rode back to the town, seven miles off, to seek the ass that he rode on. He asked of every body he met if they saw an ass stray alone; when he heard everybody say they saw none such, making great sorrow, he returned home again; at last, when he was alighted, his wife perceived, and showed him plainly, that the ass he rode on was the same that he sought, and made such sorrow for.

This jest may be well applied to such as note the faults that they spy in others, and

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take no heed, nor cannot see what ills they have, or be spotted with themselves.

TALE LXI.—THE ANSWER OF FABIUS TO LIVIUS.

When Hannibal, the captain of Carthage, had conquered Tarent, (a town pertaining to the Romans,) all save the castle, and had left a garrison to keep it. When the worthy Roman, Fabius, had knowledge thereof, he privily conducted an army thither, and got the town again, and pillaged it. Then M. Livius, who kept the garrison, said, boasting himself, "that Fabius had got the town through him and his help." "You say truth," quoth Fabius, "for if you had not lost the town, I should never have got it.

TALE LXII.—THE ANSWER OF POLTIS, KING OF THRACE, TO THE TROJAN AMBASSADORS.

Plutarch likewise writeth, that, during the war of Troy, the Greeks, and also the Trojans, sent ambassadors to a king of Thrace, called Poltis; which king answered the ambassadors, and bade, that Alexander should deliver again Helen, for she was the cause of the war, and he would give him two fair wives for her.

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TALE LXIII.—THE WISE ANSWER OF HANNIBAL TO KING ANTIOCHUS, CONCERNING HIS RICH ARMY.

When King Antiochus had prepared to make war to the Romans, he caused his army to muster before Hannibal; so they showed and mustered, both horsemen and foot men, of whose rich and sumptuous armour and apparel all the field glistened and shone, "How say you," quoth the king to Hannibal, "is not this army sufficient for the Romans?" "Yes," quoth Hannibal, "though they were the most covetous of all the world." The king meant one thing, and answered another.

TALE LXIV.—THE WORDS OF POPILIUS, THE ROMAN AMBASSADOR, TO ANTIOCHUS, THE KING.

One C. Popilius was sent, upon a time, by the senators of Rome, with letters to Antiochus, the king of Syria; wherein the king was commanded to call his army back again out of Egypt, and that he should suffer the children of Ptolemy and their realm in peace. As the ambassador came by the king's tents and pavilions, Antiochus, a good way off, saluted him, but he did not salute the king again, but delivered to him his letters. When the king had read the letters he said, that he must take

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counsel before he made an answer. Popilius, with a rod that he had in his hand, made a compass about the king, and said, "even here, standing, take counsel, and give me an answer." Every man marvelled at the gravity and courage of the ambassador; and when Antiochus was content to do as the Romans would have him, then Popilius both saluted and embraced him.

TALE LXV.—OF HIM THAT LOVED THE MERCHANT'S WIFE.

There was a young lusty gentleman, upon a time, that was right amorous, and loved a merchant's wife out of all measure, insomuch that he followed her to the church and other places, but he durst never speak. At the last, he, with two or three of his fellows, followed her to a friar's, where he had time and place convenient to speak three or four words to her, that he before had devised. So one of his fellows said, "go now and speak to her;" but he stood still all astonished. They egged and provoked him so much that at last he went to her; but, clean forgetting those words that he had devised, spake unto her this wise, "mistress, I am your own little servant." Whereat she smiled and said, "sir,

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I need not your service, for I have servants enough at home that can brush, sponge, wash, and do all my other business." The which answer, and foolish abashment of the gentleman, caused his fellows to laugh heartily. This manner of fool was well known to the poet, when he said,

"*Incipit affair, mediaque in voce resistit.*"

Folysshe loue maketh folkes astonied,
And eke to rave without remembrance
When they shulde speke, they bene abashed;
And of theyr wordes can make none utterance,
Nor be so hardye them self to auance,
What tyme they se of her, the swete face
Of whom the love, theyr hartes dothe embrace.

TALE LXVI.—OF THE WOMAN THAT COVERED HER HEAD AND SHOWED HER TAIL.

As a woman (for a certain impediment had shaved her head) sat in house bare head, one of her neighbours called her out hastily into the street; and for haste, she forgot to put on her kerchief; and when her neighbour saw her so, she blamed her for coming out bare head; wherefore she threw up her clothes over her head, and so, to cover her head, she showed her * * * *. They that stood by began to

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laugh at her foolishness, which to hide a little fault showed a greater.

This tale toucheth those who would cover a small offence with a greater wickedness; and, as the proverb sayeth, "stumble at a straw, and leap over a block."

TALE LXVII.—HOW ALEXANDER WAS ADMONISHED TO SLAY THE FIRST HE MET.

When great Alexander would enter into the Persian land with his army, he counselled with Apollo of his good speed; and, by lot, he was warned to command to slay the first he met. When he issued out at the gate, perchance the first he met was a man driving an ass before him; immediately the king commanded to take and put him to death. When the poor man saw that they would slay him, he said, "what have I done? shall I, that am an innocent, be put to death?" Alexander, to excuse his deed, said, "he was warned by divine monition to slay the first he met coming out at that gate." "If it be so, mighty king," quoth the man, "then the lot divine hath ordered another to suffer this death, and not me.

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TALE LXVIII.—HOW THE CITY OF LAMSAC WAS SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION.

As Alexander the Great, on a time, was fully purposed to have utterly destroyed a great city, called Lamsac, he saw his master, Anaximenes, come toward him without the walls; and because the king perceived manifestly that he came to entreat him for the city, he sware a great oath, that he would not do that which he came to desire him for. Then Anaximenes said, "sir, I desire your grace that this same city, Lamsac, may be utterly destroyed." Through which sage and subtle saying, the noble ancient city was saved from destruction.

TALE LXIX.—HOW DEMOSTHENES DEFENDED A MAID.

There were two men, on a time, which left a great sum of money in keeping with a maiden, on the condition that she should not deliver it again except they both came together for it. Not long after, one of them came to her, dressed in mourning, and said that his fellow was dead, and so required the money; and she gave it him. Shortly after this, came the other man, and required to have the money that was left with her in keeping. The maiden

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was then so sorrowful, both for lack of the money, and for one to defend her cause, that she thought to hang herself; but Demosthenes, that excellent orator, spake for her, and said, "sir, this maiden is ready to quit her fidelity, and to deliver again the money that was left in her keeping, so that thou wilt bring thy fellow with thee to receive it;" but that he could not do.

TALE LXX.—OF HIM THAT DESIRED TO BE MADE A GENTLEMAN.

There was a rude churlish fellow that long had served the Duke of Orleans; wherefore he came, on a time, to the duke, and desired to be made a gentleman; to whom the duke answered, "in good faith, I may well make thee rich; but as for gentleman, I can never make thee.

By which words appeareth, that goods and riches do not make a gentleman, but noble and virtuous conditions do.

TALE LXXI.—OF THE GENTLEMAN AND HIS SHREW WIFE.

There was a certain gentleman that had a cursed chiding wife, that went every day and

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complained of him to a religious man; the which religious man took upon him, by way of confession, to reconcile and accord them together, and the gentleman was very well content that he should do so, and came to him therefore. When the gentleman was come, the religious man bad him show to him his offences and trespasses. "No," quoth the gentleman, "that needeth not, for I know very well my wife hath showed unto you all the offences that ever I did, and much more."

TALE LXXII.—OF THE TWO YOUNG MEN THAT RODE TO WALSINGHAM.

One John Reynolds rode out of London, upon a time, toward Walsingham, in company of a young man of the same city, that had not much been accustomed to ride. So they came to an inn where a great company was lodged; and in the morning, when every man made him ready to ride, and some were on horseback setting forward, John Reynolds found his companion sitting, in a brown study, at the inn gate; to whom he said, "for shame man; how sittest thou? why dost thou not make thee ready to horseback, that we might set forward with company?" "I tarry,"

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quoth he, "for a good cause." "For what cause?" quoth Reynolds. "Marry," quoth he, "here be so many horses that I cannot tell which is my own among the others; and I know well, when every man is ridden and gone, the horse that remaineth behind must needs be mine.

TALE LXXIII.—OF THE YOUNG MAN OF BRUGES AND HIS SPOUSE.

A young man at Bruges, who was betrothed to a fair maiden, came, on a time, when her mother was out of the way, and had to do with her; when her mother was come in, she perceived by her daughter's appearance what she had done; wherefore she was so sore displeased that she sued a divorce, and would in no wise suffer that the young man should marry her daughter.

Not long after, the same young man was married to another maiden of the same parish; and as he and his wife sat talking, upon a time, of the aforesaid damsel, to whom he was betrothed, he fell into a nice laughing. "Whereat laugh ye?" quoth his wife. "It chanced, upon a time," quoth he, "that she and I did such a thing together, and she told

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it to her mother." "Therein," quoth the wife, "she played the fool; a servant of my father's played that game with me a hundred times, and yet I never told my mother;" when he heard her say so, he left his nice laughing.

TALE LXXIV.—OF HIM THAT MADE AS HE HAD BEEN A CHASTE LIVER.

A fellow who took upon him as he had been the most chaste and best disposed man living, was, by one of his fellows, on a time, taken in adultery, and sharply rebuked for it, because he prated so much of chastity, and yet was taken in the same fault; to whom he answered, "O, fool, dost thou think I did it for bodily pleasure? no, no; I did it only to subdue my flesh, and purge my reins."

Whereby ye may perceive, that of all, dissembling hypocrites are the worst.

TALE LXXV.—OF HIM THAT THE OLD ROOD FELL ON.

As a man kneeled, upon a time, praying before an old rood, the rood fell down on him and broke his head; wherefore he would come to the church no more for half a year after; at length, by the provocation of his neigh-

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bours, he came to the church again; and, because he saw his neighbours kneel before the same rood, he kneeled down likewise, and said thus, "well, I may cap and kneel to thee, but thou shalt never have my heart again as long as I live."

By which tale appeareth, that, by gentle and courteous entreating, men's minds be opened; for though the people cap and kneel to one in high authority, yet little wotteth he what they think.

TALE LXXVI.—OF THE WIDOW WHO WOULD NOT WED FOR BODILY PLEASURE.

There was a rich widow that desired a gossip of hers that she would get her a husband; "not for the nice play," quoth she, "but to the intent that he may keep my goods together, which is a hard thing for me to do, being a lone woman;" her gossip, who understood her conceit, promised her so to do. About three or four days afterwards she came to her again, and said, "gossip, I have found a husband for you, that is a prudent, and wary, and worldly-wise man, but he lacketh his privy members, whereof ye care not." "Go to the devil with that husband," quoth

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the widow, "for though that I desire not the nice play, yet I will that my husband should have that wherewith we may be reconciled if we fall out."

TALE LXXVII.—OF THE COVETOUS AMBASSADOR THAT WOULD HEAR NO MUSIC.

When a covetous man, on a time, was come unto a certain city, whither he was sent as ambassador for his country, anon the minstrels of the city came to him to fill his ears with sweet din, to the intent he should fill their purses with money; but he, perceiving that, bad one of his servants go and tell them that he could not then attend to hear their music, but he must demean great sorrow, for his mother was dead. So the minstrels, disappointed of their purpose, all sadly went their way; and when a worshipful man of the city, that was his friend, heard tell of his mourning, he came to visit and comfort him; and, in talking together, he asked how long ago it was that his mother deceased? "Truly," quoth he, "it is forty years ago." Then his friend, understanding his subtlety, began to laugh heartily.

This tale is applied to the covetous man, which, by all craft and means, study to keep

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and increase their money and substance, against which vice much has been written; as far, saith one, is that from a covetous man, that he hath as that he hath not; and Diogenes calleth covetousness the root of all evil; and Saint Hieronymus calleth covetousness the root of all evil; and, for an example, the following tale shall be of covetousness.

TALE LXXVIII.

Not in the original.

TALE LXXIX.—HOW DIONYSIUS, THE TYRANT, SERVED A COVETOUS MAN.

It was showed to Dionysius, the tyrant, that a covetous man of the city had hid a great sum of money in the ground, and lived most wretchedly; wherefore he sent for the man, and commanded him to go dig up the money, and so to deliver it unto him; the man obeyed, and delivered unto the tyrant all the gold and treasure that he had, save a small sum that he privily kept aside; wherewith he went into another city, and forsook Syracuse, and there bought a little land, upon which he lived. When the tyrant understood

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that he had so done, he sent for him again; and, when he was come, the tyrant said to him, "since thou hast learned now to use well thy goods, and not to keep them unprofitably, I will restore them all to thee again, and so he did."

TALE LXXX.—OF THE OLD MAN WHO CONJURED THE BOY OUT OF THE APPLE TREE WITH STONES.

As an old man walked, on a time, in his orchard, he looked up and saw a boy sit in a tree stealing his apples, whom he entreated with fair words to come down, and let his apples alone; and when the old man saw that the boy cared not for him, because of his age, and set nought by his words, he said, "I have heard say, that, not only in words, but also in herbs, should be great virtue;" wherefore he plucked up herbs, and began to throw them at the boy; whereat the boy laughed heartily, and thought that the old man had been mad, to think to drive him out of the tree by casting herbs. Then the old man said, "well, seeing that neither words nor herbs have no virtue against the stealer of my goods, I will prove what stones will do; in which, I have heard men say, is great virtue;" and so he

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gathered a lap full of stones, and threw them at the boy, and compelled him to come down and run away.

This tale showeth, that they that be wise prove many ways before they use them.

TALE LXXXI.— OF THE RICH MAN WHO WOULD NOT HAVE A GLYSTER.

There was a certain rich man, on a time, that fell sick, to whose curing came many physicians, (for flies by heaps flee to honey); among them all, there was one who said that he must needs take a glyster if he would be whole. When the sick man, that was not in love with that medicine, heard him say so, he said, in a great fury, "out of doors with those physicians, they be mad; for where, as my pain is in my head, they would heal me in mine * * *."

This fable showeth, that wholesome things to them that lack knowledge and experience seem hurtful.

TALE LXXXII.—OF HIM THAT FEIGNED HIMSELF DEAD TO PROVE WHAT HIS WIFE WOULD DO.

A young married man, on a time, to prove, to hear, and to see, what his wife would do if

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he were dead, came into his house, while his wife was forth washing of clothes, and laid him down on the floor, as he had been dead. When his wife came in, and saw him lie so, she thought he had been dead indeed; wherefore she stood even still, and devised with herself whether was better to bewail his death forthwith, or else to dine first, for she had eat no meat of all that day; all other things considered, she determined to dine first; so she cut a collop of bacon and broiled it on the coals, and began to eat thereon apace. She was so hungry, that she took no heed of drink; at last the saltness of the meat made her thirst so sore, that she must needs drink; so, as she took the pot in her hand, and was going down into the cellar to draw drink, suddenly came one of her neighbours for a coal of fire; wherefore she stepped back quickly, and though she was right thirsty, yet she set the pot aside; and, as her husband had then fallen down dead, she began to weep, and with many lamentable words, to bewail his death; which weeping and wailing, and sudden death of her husband, caused all the neighbours to come thither. The man lay still on the floor, and so held his breath and closed his eyes, that he seemed for certain to be dead. At last, when

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he thought he had made pastime enough, and hearing his wife say thus, "alas! dear husband, what shall I do now?" he looked up and said, "full ill, my sweet wife, except ye go quickly and drink." Wherewith they all from weeping turned to laughter, especially when they understood the matter, and the cause of her thirst.

Whereby ye may see, that, not without good skill, the poet said, "ut flerent oculos erudiere suos."

TALE LXXXIII.—OF THE POOR MAN INTO WHOSE HOUSE THIEVES BRAKE BY NIGHT.

There was a poor man, on a time, the which, unto thieves which brake into his house one night, he said, on this wise, "sirs, I marvel that ye think to find anything here by night; for, I assure you, I can find nothing when it is broad day."

By this tale appeareth plainly,
That poverty is a wealthy misery.

TALE LXXXIV.—OF HIM THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN HANGED FOR SCOFFING.

There was a merry fellow, in High Almayn, the which, with his scoffing and jesting, had

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so much displeased a great lord of the country, that he threatened to hang him if he could ever take him in his country. Not long after, this lord's servants took him, and hanged he was to be. When he saw that there was no remedy, but that he should die, he said, "my lord, I must needs suffer death, which I have well deserved; but yet, I beseech thee, grant me one petition for my soul's health." The lord, at the instance of the people that stood about, so that it did not concern his life, was content to grant it him. Then the fellow said, "I desire you, my lord, that after I am hanged, to come three mornings, fresh and fasting, and kiss me on the bare * * * *;" whereunto the lord answered, "the devil kiss thine * * * *;" and so let him go.

TALE LXXXV.—OF HIM THAT HAD HIS GOOSE STOLE.

A man that had a goose stole from him went and complained to the curate, and desired him to do so much, as help that he had his goose again; the curate said he would. So on Sunday the curate, as though he would curse, went up into the pulpit, and bade every body sit down; so, when they were set, he said, "why sit ye not down?" "We be set

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already," quoth they. "Nay," quoth the curate, "he that did steal the goose sitteth not." "Yes, that I do," quoth he. "Sayest thou that," quoth the curate; "I charge thee, on pain of cursing, to bring the goose home again."

TALE LXXXVI.—OF THE BEGGAR THAT SAID HE WAS KIN TO KING PHILIP OF MACEDON.

There came a beggar to king Philip of Macedon, on a time, and prayed the king to give him somewhat; and, further, he said, he was his kinsman; and when the king asked him which way, he answered and said, how they both came of Adam; then the king commanded to give him an alms. When the beggar saw that it was but a small piece of money, he said, that was not a sumly gift for a king. The king answered, "if I should give every man so much, that is my kinsman, like as thou art, I should leave nothing for myself.

TALE LXXXVII.—OF DANTE'S ANSWER TO THE JUSTICE.

Dante, the poet, dwelled awhile with Can, the Prince de la Scale, with whom also dwelled another Florentine, that had neither learning

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nor prudence, and was a man meet for nothing but to scoff and jest; but yet, with his merry toys, he so moved the said Can, that he did greatly enrich him; and, because Dante despised his foolishness, this scoffer said to him, "how cometh it, Dante, that thou art held so wise, and so well learned, and yet art poor and needy? I am an unlearned man, and am an ignorant fool, and yet I am far richer than thou art." To whom Dante answered, "if I may find a lord like and conformable to my manners, as thou hast found to thine, he will likewise make me rich."

TALE LXXXVIII.—OF HIM THAT HAD SORE EYES.

One that had sore eyes was warned of the physician that he should, in any wise, forbear drinking, or else lose his eyes. To whom he said, "it is more pleasure for me to lose mine eyes with drinking, than to keep them for worms to eat them out."

By this tale ye may perceive, that it availeth not to warn some for their own profit.

TALE LXXXIX.—OF THE OLD WOMAN THAT HAD SORE EYES.

There was an old woman, the which bargained with a surgeon to heal her sore eyes,

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and when he had made her eyes whole, and that she saw better, she covenanted that he should be paid his money, and not before; so he laid a medicine to her eyes that should not be taken away the space of five days, in which time she might not look up. Every day, when he came to dress her, he bare away somewhat of her household stuff, table-cloths, candlesticks, and dishes; he left nothing that he could carry clean. So, when her eyes were whole, she looked up, and saw that her household stuff was carried away, she said to the surgeon, that came and required his money for his labour, "sir, my promise was to pay you when ye made me see better than I did before." "That is truth," quoth he. "Marry," quoth she, "but I see worse now than I did; before ye laid medicines to my eyes, I saw much fair stuff in my house, and now I see nothing at all."

TALE XC.—OF HIM THAT HAD THE CUSTODY OF A WARD.

A certain man, who had the custody of a ward and his goods, and, in a short space had spent all away, was, by the governor of the city, commanded to bring in his books of *introitus et exitus*; that is to say, of entering

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and laying out, and to give an account of the orphan's goods. So, when he came, he showed first his mouth, and said, "here it went in;" and after, he showed up his * * * *, and said, "here it went out; and other books of *introitus et exitus* I have none."

TALE XCI.—OF THE EXCELLENT PAINTER THAT HAD UGLY CHILDREN.

There was a painter at ROME that was an excellent cunning man; and, because he had ugly children, one said to him, "by my faith, I marvel that you paint so goodly, and get such ugly children." "Yea," quoth the painter, "I make my children in the dark, but I paint these figures by daylight."

TALE XCII.—OF THE SCOFFER THAT MADE A MAN A SOOTHSAYER.

There was a merry scoffing fellow, on a time, the which took upon him to teach a man to be a soothsayer. When they were agreeable what should he have for his labour, the scoffer said to the man, "hold! eat this round pellat, and I warrant thou shalt be a soothsayer." The man took and put it in his mouth, and began to chump thereon, but it savoured

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so ill, that he spit it out forthwith, and said, "Phooh; this pellat that thou givest me to eat savoured all of a * * * * *." "Thou sayest truth," quoth the scoffer; "now thou art a soothsayer, and therefore pay me the money."

TALE XCIII.—OF THE MERCHANT OF FLORENCE, CALLED CHARLES.

A merchant of Florence, called Charles, came from Avignone to Rome; and, as he sat at supper with a great company, one asked him how the Florentines at Avignone fared? he said, "they were merry and glad, for they that dwelt there a-year," quoth he, "be as men that were frantic, and out of their mind." Then another, that sat at supper with them, asked this Charles, "how long he had dwelled there? he answered, "six months." "Charles," quoth he, that asked him the question, "thou hast a great wit, for it, that others be about twelve months, thou hast fulfilled in half a-year."

TALE XCIV.—OF THE CHESHIRE MAN, CALLED EVELYN.

There dwelt a man in Cheshire, called Evelyn, which used to go to town many times, and there he would sit drinking till twelve of

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the clock at night, and then he would go home. So, on a time, he carried a little boy, his son, on his shoulder with him; and when the child fell asleep, about nine of the clock, the ale-wife brought him to bed with her children: at midnight Evelyn went home, and thought no more on his child. As soon as he came home his wife asked for her child; when she spake of the child, he looked on his shoulder, and when he saw he was not there, he said, he wist not where he was. "Out upon thee, whoreson," quoth she, "thou hast let my child fall into the water," (for he passed over the the water of Dee at a bridge.) "Thou liest, whore," quoth he, "for if he had fallen into the water I should have heard him plump."

TALE XCV.—OF HIM THAT DESIRED TO BE SET UPON THE PILLORY.

There were three loitering fellows fell in company, on a time, the which went so long together till all their money was spent. When their money was gone, one of them said, "what shall we do now?" "By my faith," quoth another, "if I might come where a flock of people were, I could get money enough for us." "And I," quoth the third, "can assemble

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people together lightly." So when they came into a little town where a new pillory was set up, he that said he could lightly assemble people together, went to the bailiff of the town, which was a butcher, and desired him that he would give him leave to have the maidenhead of the pillory; which request at the first abashed the bailiff, for he wist not what he meant thereby; wherefore he took counsel of his neighbours what was best to do, and they bade him set up the knave, and spare not. So when he was on the pillory, he looked about, and saw his two fellows busy in the holes of the butchers' aprons, where they used to put their money; then he said, "there now, go to apace." The people gaped up still and laughed; and when he saw that his fellows had sped their matters, and were going away, he said to the people, "now turn the pillory once about, and then I will come down;" so they, laughing heartily, did. When the fellow was come down from the pillory, the bailiff said to him, "by my faith thou art a good fellow; and, because thou has made us so good sport, hold, I will give thee a groat to drink;" and so put his hand in the hole of his apron, but there he found never a penny. "Cock arms," quoth the bailiff, "my purse is picked, and my money

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is gone." "Sir," quoth the fellow, "I trust ye will bear me record that I have it not." "No, by the mass," quoth he, "thou were on the pillory the while." "Then, no force," quoth the fellow, and went his way.

TALE XCVI.—OF THE WIDOW'S DAUGHTER, WHO WAS SENT TO THE ABBOT WITH A COUPLE OF CAPONS.

There was an abbot who had a widow for his tenant, which widow, on a time, sent her daughter with a couple of capons to the abbot; and when the maiden came with her present, she found the abbot sitting at dinner, to whom she said, "much good may it do thee, my lord." "Hah! welcome, maiden," quoth he. "My lord," quoth she, "my mother hath sent thee here a couple of capons." "God a mercy, maiden," quoth he; and so he made her to sit down at his own table to eat some meat. Among other meats the abbot had then a green goose, with sorrel sauce, whereof he did eat; so one that sat at the abbot's table gave the rump of the goose to the maid to pick thereon; she took the rump in her hand, and, because she saw the abbot, and others, wet their meat in the sorrel sauce, she said, "my lord, I pray thee give me leave to wet my rump in thy green sauce."

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TALE XCVII.—OF THE TWO MEN THAT DRANK A PINT OF WHITE WINE TOGETHER.

There came two homely men of the country into a tavern, on a time, to drink a pint of wine; so they sat still and wist not what wine to call for; at last, hearing every man call for white wine, as clear as water from the rock, they bad the drawer bring them a pint of white wine as clear as water of the rock. The drawer seeing, and perceiving by their words, that they were but blunt fellows, he brought them a pint of clear water. The one of them filled his cup and drank to his fellow, and said, "hold! neighbour; by mass, I had as lief drink water, save only for the name of wine."

TALE XCVIII.—OF THE DOCTOR THAT WENT WITH THE FOWLER TO CATCH BIRDS.

There was a doctor, on a time, which desired a fowler, that went to catch birds with an owl, that he might go with him; the birder was content, and dressed him with bows, and set him by his owl, and bad him say nothing; when he saw the birds alight apace, he said, "there be many birds alighted, draw thy nets;" wherewith the birds flew away. The birder was very angry, and blamed him greatly for

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his speaking; then he promised to hold his peace. When the birder was in again, and many birds were alighted, master doctor said in Latin, "aves per multe adsunt;" wherewith the birds flew away. The birder came out right angry, and sore displeased, and said, "that by his babbling he had twice lost his prey." "Why, thinkest thou, fool," quoth the doctor, "that the birds do understand Latin?" This doctor thought that the understanding, and not the noise, had feared away the birds.

TALE XCIX.—OF HIM THAT UNDERTOOK TO TEACH AN ASS TO READ.

There was a certain tyrant, the which, to pillage one of his subjects of his goods, commanded him to teach an ass to spell and read; he said it was impossible, except he might have space enough thereto; and, when the tyrant bad him ask what time he would, he desired ten years' respite; but yet, because he undertook a thing impossible, everybody laughed him to scorn. He turned towards his friends, and said, "I am nothing afraid, for in that space either I, my lord, or else the ass, may die."

By which tale appeareth, that it is wholesome to take leisure enough about a thing

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that is hard to do, especially when a man cannot choose to take it on hand.

TALE C.—OF THE FRIAR THAT CONFESSED THE WOMAN.

As a fair young woman, of the town of ——, confessed her to a friar, he began to burn in concupiscence of the flesh, that he enticed her to consent to his will; and they agreed that she should feign herself ill, and send for him to shrive her. Within three days after, she feigned herself sick, and laid down in her bed, and sent for the same friar to shrive her; when the friar was come, and everybody sent out of the chamber, he went to bed with the woman, and there lay a long space with her. Her husband, suspecting so long a confession, came into the chamber; whose sudden coming so sore abashed the friar, that he went his way, and left his breeches behind him, lying in the bed; when her husband saw the breeches, he said aloud, "this was not a friar, but an adulterer;" and, for great abomination of the deed, he called his household to see it; and forthwith he went to the warden of the convent, and threatened to slay him that had done the deed. The warden, to appease his anger, said, that such publishing was to the

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shame of him and his household; the man said, the breeches were so publicly found that he could not hide it; the warden, to remedy the matter, said, they were Saint Francis's breeches, a holy relic that his brother carried thither for the woman's health, and that he and his convent would come and fetch them home with procession: with these words the man was content. Anon, the warden and his friars, with the cross before them, and arrayed in holy vestments, went to the house and took up the breeches, and two of them, on a cloth of silk, bare them solemnly on high between their hands; and everybody that met them, kneeled down and kissed them; so, with great ceremony and song, they brought them home to their convent; but after, when this was made known, ambassadors of the same city went and complained thereof before the holy see apostolic.

TALE CI.—HOW A CHAPLAIN OF LOUVAIN DECEIVED A USURER.

In a town of Louvain was a chaplain, called Anthony, of whose merry sayings and doings is much talking; as he met, on a day, one or two of his acquaintances, he desired them home with him to dinner, but meat he had

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none, nor money, there was no remedy but to make a shift; forth he goeth, and into a usurer's kitchen, with whom he was familiar, and privily, under his gown, he carried out the pot with meat that was for the usurer's dinner. When he came home he put out the meat, and made the pot to be scoured bright, and sent a boy with the same pot to the usurer, to borrow two groats thereon; and bade the boy take a bill of his hand, that such a brass pot he delivered him. The boy did as he was bid, and with the money he had of the usurer, he bought wine for their dinner. When the usurer should go to dinner, the pot and meat was gone; wherefore he called to chide his maid, she said there came nobody all that day but Sir Anthony; they asked him, and he said he had none; at length they said in earnest, he and no man else had the pot. "By my faith," quoth he, "I borrowed such a pot upon a time, but I sent it home again;" and so called witness to them, and said, "lo! how perilous it is to deal with men now-a-days without writing; they would lay theft to my charge; and if I had no writing of the usurer's hand:" and so he showed out the writing, and when they understood the deceit, there was good laughing.

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TALE CII.—OF THE SAME CHAPLAIN, AND ONE THAT SPITED HIM.

The same Anthony dined, on a time, with a set of merry fellows, among whom was one that greatly spited him in his scoffs and merry jests; and, as they sat laughing and sporting, one asked, which was the most reverend part of a man's body? one said the eye, another the nose; but Anthony, because he knew his envier would name just the contrary, said, the mouth was the most reverend part. "Nay," quoth his envier, "the part that we sit on is the most reverend part;" and, because they marvelled why, he made his reason, that he was most honourable among the common people that was first set, and the part that he named was the first set; which saying contented them, and they laughed merrily. He was not a little proud of his saying, and that he had overcome Anthony. This passed forth; four or five days after, they were both bid to dinner in another place; when Anthony came in, he found his envier sitting talking to another. While the dinner was getting ready, Anthony turned his back to him, and let a great * * * * against his face; his envier, greatly disdaining, said, "what, knave, with a mischief, where hast thou been nurtured?"

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"Why disdainest thou?" quoth Anthony, "if I had saluted thee with my mouth, thou wouldst have saluted me again; and now I greet thee with that part of my body that, by thine own saying, is most honourable, thou callest me knave." Thus he got again his praise that he had lost before.

TALE CIII.—OF THE OLD MAN THAT PUT HIMSELF IN HIS SON'S HANDS.

There was a certain old man which let his son to marry, and to bring his wife and his children to dwell with him, and to take all the house into his own hand and guiding; so a certain time the old man was set, and kept the upper end of the table; afterwards they set him lower, about the middle of the table; thirdly, they set him at the nether end of the table; foufthly, he was set among the servants; fifthly, they made him a couch behind the hall door, and cast on him an old sack cloth. Not long after, the old man died; when he was dead, the young man's son came to him, and said, "father, I pray you give me this old sackcloth that was wont to cover my grandfather." "What wouldst thou do with it?" said his father. "Forsooth," said the child,

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"it shall serve to cover you when ye be old, like as it did my grandfather;" at which words of the child this man ought to have been ashamed and sorry; for it is written, "son, reverence and help thy father in his old age, and make him not thoughtful and heavy in his life, and though he dotes, forgive him; he that honoureth his father shall live the longer, and shall rejoice in his own children."

TALE CIV.—OF HIM THAT HAD A FLY PAINTED ON HIS SHIELD.

A young man, that, on a time, went to warfare, caused a fly to be painted on his shield, even of the very greatness of a fly; wherefore some laughed at him, and said, "ye do well, because ye will not be known." "Yes," quoth he, "I do it because I will be known, and spoken of; for I will approach so near our enemies, that they shall well discern what arms I bear;" thus it, that was laid to him for a blame of cowardice, was by his sharp wit turned to a show of manliness; and the noble and valiant Archidemed said, "shot of cross bows, slings, and such like engines of war, are no proof of manhood; but, when they come and fight hand to hand, appeareth who be men and who be not."

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TALE CV.—OF THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS AND THE OLD MAN.

As the noble Emperor Augustus, on a time, came into a barn, he beheld an old man, that had done good service in the wars, fret himself against a marble pillar, for lack of one to help to wash him; the emperor, moved with pity, gave him an annuity to find him, and a servant to wait upon him. When this was known, a great sort of old men drew them together, and stood where as the emperor should pass forth by, every one of them rubbing his own back with a marble stone. The emperor demanded why they did so? Because, noble emperor, said they, we be not able to keep servants to do it. "Why," quoth the emperor, "one of you may claw and fret another's back well enough."

TALE CVI.—PHOCIAN'S ORATION TO THE ATHENIANS.

Phocion, on a day, treating a long oration to the people of Athens, pleased them very well; and when he saw that they altogether allowed his words, he turned to his friends, and said, "have I unwarily spoken any hurt?" so much he persuaded himself that nothing could please them that was well and truly spoken.

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TALE CVII.—OF DEMOSTHENES AND PHOCION.

Demosthenes said to Phocion, if the Athenians fall once in a madness they will slay thee. To whom he answered, "yea, surely if they wax mad they will slay me; but an they wax once wise they will slay thee;" for Demosthenes spake much to the people's pleasure, and spake things rather delightable than wholesome.

TALE CVIII.—OF PHOCION THAT REFUSED ALEXANDER'S GIFT.

What time Alexander, King of Macedon, sent a hundred bezants of gold for a gift to Phocion; he asked them that brought the money, how it came that Alexander sent it to him alone, seeing there were many other men in Athens beside him? They answered, "because he judgeth you alone to be an honest and good man." "Therefore," quoth he, "let him suffer me to be taken, and to be such one still." Who would not wonder at the clean and uncorrupt courage of this Phocion, he was but a poor man, and yet the greatness of the gift could nothing move him; beside, also, he showed that they, the which, while they minister the commonwealth, abstain not from

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taking of gifts, neither be nor ought not to be taken for good men.

TALE CIX.—OF DIONYSIUS, THE TYRANT, AND HIS SON.

What time Dyonisius, the tyrant, understood that his son, who should reign after him, had committed adultery with a worshipful man's wife, angrily he said to him, "did I, thy father, ever such a deed?" The young man answered, "no, ye had not a king to your father." "Nor thou," said Dionysius, "art not like to have a son a king, except thou leave off committing such evil deeds."

TALE CX.—OF POMPONIUS, THE ROMAN, THAT WAS BROUGHT BEFORE MITHRIDATES.

Pomponius, a nobleman of Rome, sore hurt and wounded, was taken and brought before Mithridates, which asked this question, "if I cure and heal thy wounds, wilt thou be my friend?" He answered him again thus, "if thou wilt be a friend to the Romans, then shalt thou have me thy friend."

This was a noble mind, that preferred the wealth of his country before his own health.

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TALE CXI.—OF TITUS AND THE JESTER.

Suetonius showeth, that Titus, the father, provoked a scoffer that stood jesting with everybody, that he should likewise say somewhat to him; "I will," said the scoffer, "after ye have done your easement;" he jested at the emperor's countenance, he looked always as one that strained himself. On such a visaged man writeth Martiall:

"Utere lactucis ac mollibus utere maluis
Nam faciem durum phebe cacantis habes."

TALE CXII.—OF SCIPIO NASICA, AND ENNIUS, THE POET.

When Scipio Nasica came, on a time, to speak with Ennius, the poet, he asked his maid at the door if he were within? and she said, he was not at home; but Nasica perceived that her master bade her say so, and that he was within; but, for that time, dissembling the matter, he went his way. Within a few days after, Ennius came to Nasica, and knocking at the door, asked if he were within? Nasica himself spake out aloud, and said, he was not at home. Then said Ennius, "what, man, think you that I know not your voice?" Whereunto Nasica answered, and said, "what

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a dishonest man you be; when I sought you I believed your maid, that said ye were not at home, and ye will not believe me, mine own self."

TALE CXIII.—OF FABIAS MINUTIUS AND HIS SON.

Fabius Minutius was of his son exhorted, on a time, to get and conquer a place that was meet for them, and to their great advantage; the which thing, he said, they might do with the loss of a few men. "Will ye be one of those few?" said Fabius to his son. Thereby showing, that it is a point of a good captain to care for the least of his soldiers, and to save them as near as he could. The Emperor Antonias Pius loved much this sentence of Scipio's, which would oft say, "I had rather save one citizen than slay a thousand enemies."

TALE CXIV.—OF AURELIAN, THAT WAS DISPLEASED BECAUSE THE CITY TYANA WAS CLOSED AGAINST HIM.

What time the Emperor Aurelian came to the city Tyana, he found it closed against him; wherefore, all angrily, he said, "I will not leave a dog alive in this town;" which words rejoiced much his men of war, because of the great prey and booty that they thought

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to win there. One of the citizens, called Heradamon, for fear lest he should be slain among the others, betrayed the city. When Aurelian had taken the city, the first thing he did he slew Heradamon, the traitor to his country; and to his soldiers that came to him and desired that they might, according to his promise, overrun and spoil the city, he answered, "go to, I said I would not leave a dog alive; spare not, kill all the dogs in the town." By this means the gentle prince rewarded the traitor according to his deserving, and disappointed the covetousness of his soldiers.

TALE CXV.—OF THE NUN FORCED, THAT DURST NOT CRY.

A certain nun, with the swelling of her belly, was betrayed to have accompanied a man; and, being called before the convent, was right sharply rebuked of the abbess, for putting of their house to so great a shame; she, to excuse herself, said, she was forced of a young man that came into her bed chamber, against whom, being stronger than she, it was in vain for her to strive, and force could not be imputed to her as a crime. "Then," said the abbess, "thou mightest have been held

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excused if thou hadst cried." The nun said, "so would I have done, had it not been in our Dortour, where to cry is contrary to our religion."

TALE CXVI.—OF HIM THAT SAID HE WAS THE DEVIL'S MAN.

In the civil seditious time of Edward the fourth and Henry the sixth, one chanced to meet with a company that quickly asked him, "whose man art thou?" "King Edward's," quoth he. "Art thou so," quoth they; and all beat him, for they were of Henry's side; wherefore to the next company that met him, and demanded whose man he was, he answered, "King Henry's." "Art thou so." quoth they; and likewise all beat him, for they were on Edward's part. The fellow, thus sore beaten, went forth, and met with another route, who asked him, whose man art thou? He, being at his wit's end what to say, answered "the devil's man." "Then go, the devil go with thee," said they. "Amen," quoth he, "for it is the best master I served this day."

By this tale ye may perceive, how grievous and perilous all civil seditions be; so doubtful may it stand, that a man cannot tell on which

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side to hold, for he that now is stronger another time is weaker, as fortune list to turn her wheel.

TALE CXVII.—OF THE OUTLANDISH PRIEST THAT PREACHED OF CHARITY.

A priest, in the country, not the wisest nor the best learned, preached to his parishioners of charity so vehemently, that he said plainly, that it was impossible for any man to be saved, or to come to heaven without charity, except only the King's grace, God save him.

TALE CXVIII.—ANOTHER SAYING OF THE SAME PRIEST.

Before the King's majesty's commissioners, sent down into the realm in visitation, it chanced the aforesaid priest among others to appear; to whom one of the visitors, quickly guessing what doctor he was, said, "master parson, how spend you your time? what read you?" "Forsooth, sir," said the priest, "I occupy myself in reading the New Testament." "That is very well done," said the commissioner; "but, sir, I pray you, who made the New Testament?" "That did," said the priest, "King Henry the eighth; God have mercy upon his soul."

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TALE CXIX.—OF THE FRIAR THAT PRAISED SAINT FRANCIS.

A friar, preaching to the people, extolled Saint Francis above confessors, doctors, virgins, martyrs, prophets, yea, and above one more than prophets, John the Baptist; and, finally, above the seraphical order of angels; and still, he said, "let us go up higher;" so, when he could go no further, except he should put Christ out of his place, which the good man was half afraid to do, he said aloud, "and yet we have found no fit place for him;" and, staying a little while, he cried out at last, saying, "where shall we place this holy father?" A froward fellow, standing among the audience, said, "if thou canst find none other, then set him here in my place, for I am weary;" and so went his way

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TALE CXX.—OF HIM THAT WARNED HIS WIFE OF WASHING HER FACE IN FOUL PUDDLE WATER.

A man, dwelling in the country, taking his journey, bad his wife in his absence play the good housewife, that he, at his home coming, might find all things well. "Sweet husband," quoth she, "command what ye will, and ye shall find me obedience in all things." "Dear

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heart," said he, "I will ye no more but this one thing, which is easy enough to do." "What is that?" quoth she. "That you wash not your face with this water;" showing her a puddle in a dung-hill, foul, black, and stinking. As oft as she, in his absence, went by that puddle, her mind was marvellously moved for what cause her husband so diligently warned her of that thing only, nor she could not persuade herself that there was not some great thing in it; to be brief, it tempted her so, that she washed, that is, she defiled her face; she looked in the glass, and was greatly displeased with herself; yea, and it was four or five days after ere she could wash out the stink and staining. When the good man came home, he found his wife very pensive, and looking angrily; "what is the matter?" quoth he. She at last could not forbear, but blamed him for warning her to wash in that water, and showed him what had chanced. "Why washed you in it?" quoth he, "I gave you warning that you should not wash therein, to the intent this harm should not have happened.

By this tale ye may perceive, that the more ye forbid some women a thing, the greater desire they have to do it.

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TALE CXXI.—OF THE HUSBANDMAN THAT CAUSED THE JUDGE TO GIVE SENTENCE AGAINST HIMSELF.

A husbandman, in Zealand, came before the chief ruler of the country, whose bull had killed the poor man's cow; and, after he had leave to speak, he said, "my bull, leaping over a ditch, hath killed your cow; what is the law?" The ruler, mistrusting no deceit, answered, "thou must pay for her." Then, with license, the poor man said, "sir, I failed in my tale, your bull hath killed my cow." The ruler, being a little moved, said, "this is another matter." The poor man said. "verily, it is all one thing, and you have truly judged."

By this tale ye perceive, that a wise judge will first know the cause well, and yet will not be hasty to give sentence. The proverb biddeth thus, "judge righteously the cause of the poor and needy."

TALE CXXII.—OF THE ITALIAN FRIAR THAT SHOULD PREACH BEFORE THE BISHOP OF ROME AND HIS CARDINALS.

A famous friar, in Italy, called Robert Liciens, appointed to preach before the Bishop of Rome and his cardinals, being in the pulpit, and beholding the bishop and his cardinals enter into the church with so great pomp,

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noise, and ruffling, that no king used the like; and seeing the bishop borne by six men, and being at great leisure, sit down, and hearkening what he would say; he said nought else but this, "fy on St. Peter; fy on St Paul;" and with raving, he spit now on the right side and now on the left; and so, without more ado, shoving through the flock, got him away, leaving them all astonished; some thinking him to be fallen into a fury; others supposing him to be fallen into some heresy, Jewish or Paganish belief, that he burst out into such blasphemies; and, when it was consulted to lay him in prison, a cardinal, who knew his wit and loved him, persuaded that he should first be called before the bishop and certain cardinals, to hear what he would say; and so, being inquired why he burst out into so horrid blasphemies? he answered, that he had appointed a far other argument; and, in few words, declared the whole sum of his sermon; "but when I," said he, "saw you live so pompously, and in so great delights and pleasures; and, on the other side considered how homely, how painful, and how hard a life the apostles led, whose places you supply, I gathered that either they were mad, that by so sharp a way contended to come to

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heaven, or else you to be holding the straight way to hell; but of you, that bear the keys of heaven, I could not persuade myself to deem evil; then, what else could I do but detest their foolishness, which when they might, after this fashion, have lived gloriously in all wealth and pleasure, would rather all their life torment themselves with watchings, fastings, and other painful labours."

TALE CXXIII.—OF THE DOCTOR THAT SAID, "IN ERASMUS' WORKS WERE HERESIES."

A notable doctor, preaching in a solemn audience, said, that in Erasmus' works were certain heresies; who, being come out of the pulpit, was desired of a learned man to show forth some place heretical. He answered, "that he had never read Erasmus' books; he began once to read the work entitled *Moria*, but by reason it was so high a style, he feared to fall into some heresy."

TALE CXXIV.—OF THE FRIAR THAT PREACHED AT PAUL'S CROSS AGAINST ERASMUS.

A great clerk, brought up by school doctors, not well understanding the Latin style and

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phrase, that then began to flourish apace, and having small acquaintance with the noble authors of the Latin tongue, said, that Erasmus, with his rhetoric and eloquence, went about to corrupt the Bible; "for this," quoth he, "I dare be bold to say, that the holy scriptures ought not to be mingled with the eloquence of Tully nor yet of Cicero."

TALE CXXV.—OF ANOTHER FRIAR THAT TAXED ERASMUS FOR WRITING GERMANA THEOLOGIA.

A friar, that preached on a time to the people, inveighed greatly against Erasmus, because he, in his book, called *Enchiridion*, praiseth the apostles' doctrines, said, that theirs was *Germana Theologia*, that is to say, in English, the very right divinity. "So," saith this doting friar, "here may ye see what a man Erasmus is, he says, there is no divinity but in Germany, where heretics are specially favoured and maintained."

TALE CXXVI.—OF ANOTHER THAT INVEIGHED AGAINST THE SAME ERASMUS.

Because Erasmus wrote, that it were better for the monks of the charterhouse to eat flesh,

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than to suffer his brother "*venire in capitis discrimen;*" that is to say, than his brother should stand in jeopardy of his life. This doting doctor interpreted his words thus, "the charterhouse monks were better eat flesh, than his head should a little ache."

By these tales ye may see, what peevish preachers have been in this world; and, be they never so foolish, yet the ignorant people, lacking learning to judge such matters, think themselves well taught, when they be clean misled.

TALE CXXVII.—OF KING RICHARD THE THIRD AND THE NORTHERN MAN.

After King Richard the third had usurped the crown of England, he, to stay and stablish the people, that sore murmured against his doings, sent for five thousand men out of the north parts up to London; and, as he was mustering them in Thicket's Field, one of the soldiers came, and clapping the king on the shoulder, said, "Diccon, Diccon, by the mass ays blithe that thou'st king."

TALE CXXVIII.—OF THE CANON AND HIS MAN.

A canon in Hereford, that kept a good house, took into his service a gentleman's son

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to trade, and bring him up to wait and serve at the table; so, on a day, the said canon, having many strangers at his house, made a sign to his man that there wanted something. He, nought perceiving, came to his master, and said, "sir, what lack you?" "Seest not, man," quoth he, "they have no bread on the table," "Sir," said his man, "there was enough, even now, if they would have let it alone."

TALE CXXIX.—OF THE SAME CANON AND HIS SAID MAN.

The same canon another time bad his said servant, after supper, go down and draw a cup of wine, to make his guests drink at their departing, whom he had before taught how he should take off the cover; so the young man, bringing the candle in one hand, and the cup of wine, covered, in the other, offered it unto them; his master, seeing that, made a sign to him. He, not knowing wherefore, said, "sir, what would you have?" "Take off the cover," quoth his master. "Then hold you the candle," said the servant.

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TALE CXXX.—OF THE GENTLEMAN THAT CHECKED HIS SERVANT FOR TALK OF RINGING.

A gentleman, brought up at London in an inn of court, was married, and kept a house in the country; and as he sat at supper, with his neighbours about him, upon an Allhallow's day, at night, among other communication, he talked of the solemn ringing of the bells, as was the usage then. His man, that waited on the table, said to his master, "sir, he that were this night in London should hear wonderful ringing;" and so began a tale. His master, not content with his talk, said, "hold thy peace, fool; wilt thou tell me of ringing in London, I know it, I trow, a little better than thou; for I have been there a hundred Allhallow nights."

TALE CXXXI.—OF THE BLIND MAN AND THE BOY.

A certain poor blind man, in the country, was led by a cursed boy to a house where a wedding was; so the honest folks gave him meat; and, at last, one gave him a leg of a good fat goose, which the boy receiving, kept aside, and did eat up himself; anon the blind man said, "Jack, where is the leg of the goose?" "What goose?" quoth the boy, "I

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have none." "Thou liest," quoth the blind man, "I did smell it;" and so they went forth, chiding together, till the shrewd boy led the poor man against a post; where, hitting his brow a great blow, he cried out, "a whoreson, boy, what hast thou done?" "Why," quoth the boy, "could you not smell the post that was so near, as well as the goose that was so far from your nose?"

TALE CXXXII.—OF HIM THAT SOLD TWO LOADS OF HAY.

In London dwelt a merry pleasant man, which, for this time, we may call Makeshift, who being arrayed somewhat harvest like, with a pitchfork on his neck, went forth on a morning, and met with two loads of hay coming to the city; for the which he bargained with the owners to pay thirty shillings; "whither shall we bring them?" quoth they. "To the Swan, in Long Lane, by Smithfield," quoth he; and so left them, and sped him thither the nearest way. When he came to the good man of the Swan, he asked, if he would buy two good loads of hay? "Yes, marry," said he, "where be they?" "Even here they come," quoth Makeshift. "What shall I pay?" said the inn-holder. "Four

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nobles," quoth he; but at length they agreed for twenty shillings. When the hay was come, Makeshift bid them unload; and, while they were so doing, he came to the inn-holder, and said, "sir, I pray you let me have my money, for, while my men be unloading, I will go into the city to buy a little stuff to have home with me;" the good man was content, and gave it him, and so he went his way. When the men had unloaded the hay, they came and demanded their money; to whom the inn-holder said, "I have paid your master." "What master?" quoth they. "Marry," quoth he, "the same man that made you bring the hay thither." "We know him not," quoth they. "No more do I," quoth he; "that same man bargained with me for the hay, and him I have paid; I neither bought nor sold with you." "That is not enough for us," quoth they; and thus they strove together; but what end they made I know not, for I think Makeshift came not again to agree them.

TALE CXXXIII.—HOW A MERRY MAN DEVISED TO CALL PEOPLE TO A PLAY.

A merry man, called Qualitees, on a time set up bills upon posts about London, that

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whosoever would come to Northumberland Place should hear such an antique play, that, both for the matter and handling, the like was never heard before, for all they that should play therein were gentlemen. Those bills moved the people, when the day came, to come thither thick and threefold. Now he had hired two men to stand at the gate with a box, as the fashion is, who took of every person who came in a penny, or a halfpenny at the least; so, when he thought the market was at the best, he came to the gate, and took from the men the box with money, and giving them their duty, bade them go into the hall and see the room kept, for he should go and fetch in the players; they went in, and he went out, and locked the gate fast, and took the key with him, and gat him on his gelding, which stood ready saddled without Aldersgate, at an inn, and towards Barnet he rode apace. The people tarried from two o'clock till three, from three to four, still asking and crying, when shall the play begin? how long shall we tarry? When the clock struck four all the people murmured, and said, wherefore tarry we any longer? here shall be no play; where is the knave that hath beguiled us hither? it were alms to thrust a dagger

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through his cheeks, saith one; it were well done to cut off his ears, said another; have him to Newgate, saith one; nay, have him to Tyburn, said another; shall we lose our money thus? saith he; shall we be thus beguiled? saith this man; should this be suffered? saith that man; and so, muttering and chiding, they came to the gate to go out; but they could not, for it was fast locked, and Qualitees had the key away with him. Now begin they afresh to fret and fume; now they swear and stare; now they stamp and threaten, for the locking in grieved them more than all the loss and mockery before; but all avail not, for there must they abide till ways be found to open the gate, that they may go out. The maidens, that should have dressed their masters' suppers, they weep and cry; boys and apprentices sorrow and lament, they wot not what to say when they come home; for all this foul array, for all this great fray, Qualitees is merry riding on his way.

TALE CXXXIV.—HOW THE IMAGE OF THE DEVIL WAS LOST AND SOUGHT.

In the Goldsmiths' hall, among their other plate, they had a fair standing cup with an

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image of St. Dunstan on the cover, which image had an image of the devil at his foot. So it chanced, at a banquet, that the said image of the devil was lost and gone; on the morrow after the beadle of the company was sent about to search among the goldsmiths if any such came to be sold; and, like as of other, he inquired of one, if any man had brought it to him to be sold, the fool that sat at Saint Dunstan's foot, upon the cover of the cup. "What fool mean you?" quoth he. "Marry, the devil," said the beadle. "Why," quoth the other, "call ye the devil a fool? ye shall find him a shrewd fool if ye have ought to do with him; and why seek you for him here, among us?" "Where else should I seek for him?" said the beadle. "Marry, in hell," quoth he, "for there ye shall be sure to find the devil."

TALE CXXXV.—OF TACHAS, KING OF EGYPT, AND AGESILAUS.

What time Agesilaus, King of the Lacedemonians, was come to Tachas, the King of Egypt, to aid him in his wars. Tachas, beholding Agesilaus to be a man of so little stature, and small personage, taunting him with this scoff, said, "the mountain hath

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travailed; Jupiter forbode, but yet he hath brought forth a mouse." Agesilaus, being offended with his saying, answered, "and yet the time will come that I shall seem to thee a lion;" and not long after, it chanced, through a sedition that arose among the Egyptians, when Agesilaus was gone from him, the king was constrained to flee to the Persians.

TALE CXXXVI.—OF CORAR, THE RHETORICIAN, AND TISIAS, HIS SCHOLAR.

A certain man, called Corar, determined himself, for meed, to teach the art of rhetoric, with whom a young man, named Tisias, covenanted on this wise, that he would pay him his wages when he had properly learned the science; so, when he had learned the art, he made no haste to pay his teacher, wherefore his master sued him. When they came before the judges, the young man demanded of his master, what was the effect of the science? He answered, in reasoning to persuade; "then go to, if I persuade these honourable judges that I owe you nothing, I will pay you nothing, for you are cast in your action; and, if I cannot persuade them, then will I pay you nothing, because I have

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not yet perfectly learned the art." Corax, wresting the young man's argument against himself, said, "if thou persuade them that thou owest me nothing, then, according to the covenant, thou must needs pay me my wages, for thou hast the art perfectly; now, if thou canst not persuade them, yet shalt thou pay me my wages, because thou art condemned, by the judges' sentence, to be my debtor."

TALE CXXXVII.—OF AUGUSTUS AND ATHENODORUS, THE PHILOSOPHER.

What time Athenodorus, the philosopher, had, by reason of his great age, obtained license of Augustus to depart home, he admonished him, that, being angry, he should neither say nor do anything before he had, by himself, rehearsed over the twenty-four Greek letters; which saying, when the prince heard, he said, he had yet need of him to teach him the art to keep silence; under pretence whereof he retained the old man about him a whole year longer.

By this tale we may perceive, that of all things a prince, a ruler, a judge, ought specially to eschew wrath. For the moral book saith, "anger troubleth the mind that it cannot dis-

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cern truth;" and Seneca writeth, "that slow tarrying doth profit in nothing but in wrath."

TALE CXXXVIII.—OF THE FRENCH KING AND THE BROOMSELLER.

As a French king, on a time, was in hunting, he happened to lose his company; and coming through a broom heath, he heard a poor man and his wife piteously complain on fortune. The king, after he had well heard the long lamentation of their poor and miserable state, came unto them; and after a few words, he questioned with them how they lived? they showed him how they came daily to that heath, and all the broom that they and their ass could carry home, was little enough to find them and their poor children meat. "Well," quoth the king, "look that you bring to-morrow early, to the court gate, as many brooms as you and your ass can carry; and see that you sell them well, for I warrant you they shall be bought apace;" they thanked him, and so he departed from them. Anon came the lords, knights, and gentlemen to the king, and home they rode. After supper the king called them all before him, and gave them in commandment, that neither lord,

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knight, nor gentleman, should, on the morrow, come into the court without a new broom in his hand, for he had a thing to do which they should know afterwards. So, on the morrow, when they came to the court-gate, they found the poor man, his wife, and the ass, loaded with brooms, which he sold to the gallants of the court, even as he himself would; whereby the said poor man was made rich for ever, and they little the worse. Thus, when the king saw the states and gentlemen of his court come in so well furnished with green brooms, and considering the cause whereof it was, he laughed heartily.

TALE CXXXIX.—ANOTHER TALE OF THE SAME FRENCH KING.

There chanced, in a certain part of the realm, an office to fall into the king's hands, by the death of a man, which was worth a thousand crowns by the year; an honest witty gentleman, dwelling thereby, trusting to obtain the said office, made as good speed to the court as he could; and, as soon as he might come to the king's presence, he kneeled down, and, in most humble wise, desired his grace to give unto him that office, declaring what it was. The king, perceiving how good an

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office it was, and thinking therewith to reward some such one of his servants that had well deserved it, answered quickly, and said, "my friend, be content, you get it not." "The gentleman, hearing these words, said, "I most heartily thank your grace, both I and mine are most bounden to pray for your highness;" and so, making low obeisance, went his way. When he had gone a little way, the king commanded to call him again; when he was come back, the king asked, if he did well understand what answer he gave him? "Yes, truly," said the gentleman. "What said I?" quoth the king. "Marry, your grace bid me be content, for I should not have the office." "Why did you then," quoth the king, "give me so great thanks?" "Because," said the gentleman, "your grace gave me so soon an answer, without longer suite and loss of time, which would have been to me a very much hinderance, for I have at home a great household, unto which it behoveth me to look diligently, or else it will be wrong with me." The king, marking well the wisdom and dexterity of the gentleman, and conceiving a favour towards him, said, "well, now shall you thank me twice, for thou shalt have the office that you sue for; and then, casting his

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eyes on the chancellor, commanded him, that all such writings as concerned the said office should with all speed be made out, that he were at home again to overlook his family.

TALE CXL.—WHAT AN ITALIAN FRIAR DID IN HIS PREACHING.

Robert Liciens, a friar of Italy, of whom we spoke before, preaching on a time with great vehemency and gesture, exhorted the prince and people to make war against the Turks, and others, the enemies of Christendom; and when he came to the very effect, and most hot and earnest in his tale, he began to weep that there were none that would, to so goodly a purpose, offer themselves to be captains; "if this be the let of the matter, behold me here, which will be nothing abashed to cast aside this grey friar's coat, and to take upon me to be a soldier or your captain;" and even, with that word, he cast off his upper coat, and underneath he was a plain soldier, arrayed in a scarlet cloak, and a long rapier hanging by his side; and in this warlike apparel, in the personage of a captain, he stood and preached half an hour. Being sent for of the cardinals, with whom he was familiar, he was asked,

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what was the pretence of that new example? He answered, that he did it for his wench's pleasure; who familiarly confessed, that nothing in the said Robert displeased her, save his friar's coat; then said he to her, "in what apparel shall I best please you?" "In a man of war's," quoth she. "Then see that ye be at my sermon to-morrow," quoth he.

FINIS.

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INDEX.

PART I.—MERRY TALES.

Tale.		Page.
1.	Of him that said there were but two commandments	1
2.	Of the wife who laid with her apprentice, and caused him to beat her husband, who was disguised in her apparel	2
3.	Of John Adroyns in the devil's apparel	4
4.	Of the rich man and his two sons	7
5.	Of the cuckold who gained a ring by his judgment	8
6.	Of the scholar who gave his shoes to be mended	9
7.	Of the man who said a woman's tongue was lightest of digestion	10
8.	Of the woman who followed her fourth husband to the grave	10
9.	Of the woman who said her lover came too late	11
10.	Of the miller with his golden thumb	12
11.	Of the horseman of Ireland who prayed O'Conner to hang up the friar	12
12.	Of the priest who neither said corpus meus nor corpus meum	14
13.	Of two friars whereof one loved not the eel's head nor the other the tail	15
14.	Of the Welshman that shrove him for breaking his fast on a Friday	16
15.	Of the merchant of London, who put nobles in his mouth on his death bed	18
16.	Of the miller who stole nuts, and of the tailor who stole a sheep	19
17.	Of the four elements, where they should soon be found	24
18.	Of the woman who poured the potage in the judge's male	25
19.	Of the wedded men who came to heaven to claim their heritage	27
20.	Of the merchant who charged his son to find one to sing for his soul	28
21.	Of the maid that was washing clothes, and answered the friar	29
22.	Of the three wise men of Gotam	30
23.	Of the grey friar who answered his penitent	31

Digitized by Google

Tale. Page.
24. Of the gentleman that bare the seat of the privy about his neck 30
25. Of the merchant's wife who said she would take a nap at sermon 35
26. Of the woman that said if she lived another year she would have a cuckold's hat of her own . 35
27. Of the gentleman that wished his tooth in the gentlewoman's tail 35
28 Of the Welshman that confessed him how he had slain a friar 36
29. Of the Welshman that could not get but a little male 37
30. Of the gentlewoman that said to a gentleman, "ye have a beard above, and none below" . . 38
31. Of the friar who said our Lord fed five thousand people with three fishes 39
32. Of the franklyn that would have had the friar gone 40
33. Of the priest that said our Lady was not so curious a woman 41
34. Of the good man that said to his wife that he had evil fare 42
35. Of the friar that bade his child make a lantern . 42
36. Of the gentleman that asked the friar for his brother 43
37. Of the three men who chose the woman . . . 43
38. Of the gentleman who taught his cook the medicine for the tooth ache 44
39. Of the gentleman who promised the scholar of Oxford a sarcenet tippet 46
40. Of Master Skelton, who brought the bishop of Norwich two pheasants 48
41. Of the yeoman of the guard, who said he would beat the carter 51
42. Of the fool that said he had rather go to hell than heaven 52
43. Of the ploughman's son, who said he saw one make a goose sing sweetly 53
44. Of the maid's answer that was with child . . 53
45. Of the servant who rhymed with his master . 54
46. Of the Welshman who delivered the letter to the ape 55
47. Of him who sold nothing 57
48. Of the friar who told the children's fortunes . 58

Digitized by Google

Tale. Page.
49. Of the boy who bare to the friar his master's money 60
50. Of Philip Spencer, the butcher's man . . 60
51. Of the courtier and the carter 61
52. Of the young man who prayed his fellow to teach him his pater noster 62
53. Of the friar that preached in rhyme expounding the Ave Maria 63
54. Of the curate that preached the articles of the creed 65
55. Of the friar who preached the ten commandments 66
56. Of the wife who bade her husband eat the candle first 68
57. Of the answer of the lawyer's son 68
58. Of the friar in the pulpit, who bade the woman cease her babbling 68
59. Of the Welshman who cast the Scot into the sea 69
60. Of the man who had the dumb wife 70
61. Of the proctor of arches who had a little wife . 72
62. Of two nuns that were shriven of one priest . . 72
63. Of the esquire who should have been made a knight 73
64. Of the man who would get the mastery of his wife 75
65. Of the penitent who said, "the Sheep of God have mercy upon me" 76
66. Of the husband that said he was John Dawe . 77
67. Of the scholar of Oxford who proved by sophistry two chickens to be three 78
68. Of the friar who stole the pudding 79
69. Of the franklyn's son who came to take orders . 80
70. Of the husbandman who lodged the friar in his own bed 81
71. Of the priest who would say two gospels for a groat 82
72. Of the courtier who cast the friar over the boat 83
73. Of the friar who preached what men's souls were 83
74. Of the husband that cried blé under the bed . 83
75. Of the shoemaker that asked the collier, "what tidings in hell?" 85
76. Of Saint Peter who cried, "cause bobe" . 85
77. Of him who adventured body and soul for his prince 86
78. Of the parson who stole the miller's eggs . . 87
79. Of the Welshman who saw one forty shillings better than God 87

Digitized by Google

Tale. Page.
80. Of the friar who said dirge for the hog's soul . 87
81. Of the parson who said the mass of requiem for Christ's soul 89
82. Of the herdsman who said, "ride apace, we shall have rain" 89
83. Of the man who said, "I shall not have a penny" 91
84. Of the husband who said his wife and he agreed well 91
85. Of the priest that said, "comede episcope" . 92
86. Of the woman who stole the pot 93
87. Of Master Whittington's dream 93
88. Of the priest who killed his horse, called Modicus 94
89. Of the Welshman who stole the Englishman's cock 95
90. Of him who brought a bottle to a priest . . 95
91. Of the indictment of Jesus of Nazareth . . 96
92. Of the friar who preached against those who rode on a Sunday 97
93. Of the one brother who found a purse . . 98
94. Of the answer of the mistress to the maid . . 99
95. Of the Northern man who was all heart . . 99
96. Of the burning of old John 99
97. Of the courtier who ate hot custard. . . 101
98. 102
99. Of the three points belonging to a shrewd wife 102
100. Of the man who painted a lamb upon his wife's belly 103

PART II.—TALES AND QUICK ANSWERS.

1. Of him that rode out of London and had his servant following on foot 107
2. Of him that preached on St. Christopher's day 108
3. Of the Frenchman that strove with the Genoese for his arms 108
4. Of the curate that said our Lord fed five hundred persons 109
5. Of him who offered his daughter in marriage . 109
6. Of them that came to London to buy a crucifix 110
7. Of him that followed his wife to burying . . 110
8. Of him that fell into the fire 111
9. Of him that used to call his servant the king of fools 112
10. Of the young woman who sorrowed so greatly her husband's death 112

Digitized by Google

Tale.		Page.
11.	Of him that kissed the maid with a long nose	113
12.	The outlandishman's answer, concerning the steeple and pulpit	114
13.	Of the beggar's answer to Skelton the poet	115
14.	Of the chaplain who said our Lady's matins in bed	115
15.	Of him that lost his purse in London	116
16.	Of the merchant that lost his budget between Ware and London	117
17.	Of him that was called cuckold	118
18.	Of the jealous man	119
19.	Of the fat woman that sold fruit	120
20.	Of the cheat that beguiled a priest	121
21.	Of Papirius Pretextatus	122
22.	Of the corrupt man of law	124
23.	Of King Louis of France and the husbandman	125
24.	Of another pickthank and the same king	127
25.	Of Thales, the astrologer, who fell in a ditch	129
26.	Of the astronomer that thieves robbed	129
27.	Of the ploughman who said his pater noster	130
28.	Of him that dreamed he found gold	131
29.	Of the cracking young gentleman, who would overthrow his enemies a mile off	133
30.	Of him that fell off a tree and brake his ribs	134
31.	Of the friar that brayed in his sermon	135
32.	The oration of the ambassador sent to Pope Urban	136
33.	Of the ambassador sent to the Prince Agis	137
34.	The answer of Clemence to the Samiens ambassador	137
35.	Of the wise man, Piso, and his servant	138
36.	Of the merchant that made a wager with his lord	139
37.	Of the friar that gave scrolls against pestilence	141
38.	Of the physician that used to write bills over night	142
39.	Of him that would confess him by writing	143
40.	Of the hermit of Padua	144
41.	Of the outlandishman who saw the king	145
42.	Of the courtier that bad the boy hold his horse	146
43.	Of the deceitful scrivener	147
44.	Of him that said he believed his wife better than other, that she was chaste	148
45.	Of him that paid his debt with crying "Bea"	149

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Tale. Page.
46. Of the woman who appealed from King Philip to King Philip 151
47. Of the old woman who prayed for the welfare of the tyrant, Dionysius 152
48. Of the physician, Eumonus 152
49. Of Socrates and his scolding wife . . . 153
50. Of the physician that bare his patient on hand he had eaten an ass 154
51. Of the inn-holder's wife and her two lovers . 156
52. Of him that healed frantic men . . . 157
53. Of him that said he was not worthy to open the gate to the king 158
54. Of Master Vavesor, and Turpin, his man . 159
55. Of him that sought his wife against the stream 161
56. Of him who, at a skirmish, defended himself with his feet 161
57. Of him that would give a song for his dinner . 162
58. Of the fool who thought himself dead . . 163
59. Of the old man and his son that brought his ass to the town to sell 166
60. Of him that sought his ass, and rode on his back 168
61. The answer of Fabius to Livius . . . 169
62. The answer of Poltis, King of Thrace, to the Trojan ambassadors 169
63. The wise answer of Hannibal to King Antiochus, concerning his rich army 170
64. The words of Pobilius, the Roman ambassador, to Antiochus, the king 170
65. Of him that loved the merchant's wife . . 171
66. Of the woman that covered her head showed her tail 172
67. How Alexander was admonished to slay the first he met 173
68. How the city of Lamsac was saved from destruction 174
69. How Demosthenes defended a maid . . 174
70. Of him that desired to be made a gentleman . 175
71. Of the gentleman and his shrew wife . . 175
72. Of the two young men that rode to Walsingham 176
73. Of the young man of Bruges and his spouse . 177
74. Of him that made as he had been a chaste liver 178
75. Of him that the old rood fell on . . . 178
76. Of the widow who would not wed for bodily pleasure 179

Digitized by Google

Tale.		Page.
77.	Of the covetous ambassador that would hear no music	181
78.		181
79.	How Dionysius, the tyrant, served a covetous man	181
80.	Of the old man who conjured the boy out of the apple tree with stones	182
81.	Of the rich man who would not have a glyster	183
82.	Of him that feigned himself dead to prove what his wife would do	183
83.	Of the poor man into whose house thieves brake by night	185
84.	Of him that should have been hanged for scoffing	185
85.	Of him that had his goose stole	186
86.	Of the beggar that said he was kin to King Philip of Macedon	187
87.	Of Dante's answer to the justice	187
88.	Of him that had sore eyes	188
89.	Of the old woman that had sore eyes	188
90.	Of him that had the custody of a ward	189
91.	Of the excellent painter that had ugly children	190
92.	Of the scoffer that made a man a soothsayer	190
93.	Of the merchant of Florence, called Charles	191
94.	Of the Cheshire man, called Evelyn	191
95.	Of him that desired to be set upon the pillory	192
96.	Of the widow's daughter, who was sent to the abbot with a couple of capons	194
97.	Of the two men that drank a pint of white wine together	195
98.	Of the doctor that went with the fowler to catch birds	195
99.	Of him that undertook to teach an ass to read	196
100.	Of the friar that confessed the woman	197
101.	How a chaplain of Louvain deceived a usurer	198
102.	Of the same chaplain, and one that spited him	200
103.	Of the old man that put himself in his son's hands	201
104.	Of him that had a fly painted on his shield	202
105.	Of the Emperor Augustus and the old man	203
106.	Phocion's oration to the Athenians	203
107.	Of Demosthenes and Phocion	204
108.	Of Phocion that refused Alexander's gift	204
109.	Of Dionysius, the tyrant, and his son	205
110.	Of Pomponius, the Roman, that was brought before Mithridates	205
111.	Of Titus and the jester	206

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Tale.		Page.
112.	Of Scipio Nasica, and Ennius, the poet	206
113.	Of Fabius Minutius and his son	207
114.	Of Aurelian, that was displeased because the city Tyana was closed against him	207
115.	Of the nun forced that durst not cry	208
116.	Of him that said he was the devil's man	209
117.	Of the outlandish priest that preached of charity	210
118.	Another saying of the same priest	210
119.	Of the friar that praised St. Francis	211
120.	Of him that warned his wife of washing her face in foul puddle water	211
121.	Of the husbandman that caused the judge to give sentence against himself	213
122.	Of the Italian friar that should preach before the bishop of Rome and his cardinals	213
123.	Of the doctor that said, "in Erasmus' works were heresies"	215
124.	Of the friar that pre . at Paul's Cross against Erasmus	215
125.	Of another friar that taxed Erasmus for writing Germana Theologia	216
126.	Of another that inveighed against the same Erasmus	216
127.	Of King Richard the Third and the Northern man	217
128.	Of the canon and his man	217
129.	Of the same canon and his said man	218
130.	Of the gentleman that checked his servant for talk of ringing	219
131.	Of the blind man and the boy	219
132.	Of him that sold two loads of hay	220
133.	How a merry man devised to call people to a play	221
134.	How the image of the devil was lost and sought	223
135.	Of Tachas, King of Egypt, and Agesilaus	224
136.	Of Corar, the rhetorician, and Tisias, his scholar	225
137.	Of Augustus, and Athenodorus, the philosopher	226
138.	Of the French King and the broomseller	227
139.	Another tale of the same French King	228
140.	W at an Italian friar did in his preaching	230

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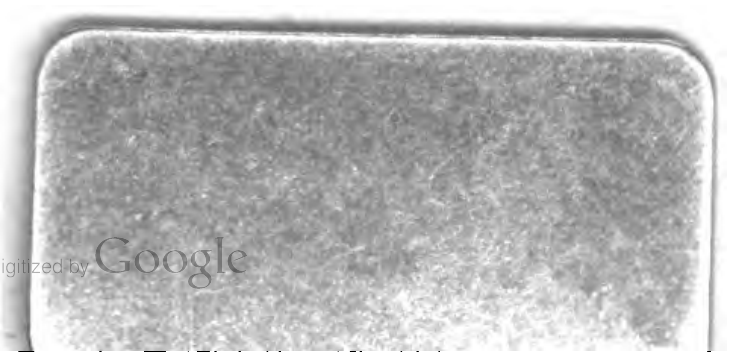
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